Yardsticks for Judging A House

First of a continuing series
to help you tell
a good house from a bad one.
From a forthcoming book,
You and Architecture,
by Alfred Browning Parker,
an architect well known to
House Beautiful readers

By ALFRED BROWNING PARKER



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA STOLLER ASSOCIATES

Some not-quite-explainable harmony develops when the material used for building is native and indigenous to the site, as shown in this house by Frank Lloyd Wright in New York State.

● We all use buildings, but very few of these buildings are architecture. If you appreciate and understand these few, you will desire more and better as your just due—and you will then demand the best.

An ideal way to learn about buildings would be to walk into, through, and around a good building with someone who understands it and who could explain it to you clearly, simply, and easily. However, with words and illustrations, I intend to suggest some yardsticks by which you can judge whether a building has architectural merit.

There are excellent reasons for learning about architecture. The purchase of a home is the largest single investment that most of us make in our entire lives. Then, when we consider the furnishings, maintenance, insurance, taxes, depreciation, etc., we suddenly become aware of the large amount of time and energy (another way most of us can express money) that is required for shelter. We ought to be sure that we get full value for what we expend.

Another reason, quite apart from a materialistic consideration, is to develop an awareness that will enrich your days. When I challenge you to appreciate architecture, I am asking you to sharpen your perceptions—to become more aware of volumes, lines, spaces, colors, textures, shapes. I am asking you to cultivate your innate sense of the genuine as opposed to the false and the phony. Architecture exists only in the climate of an enthusiastic and aware spirit.

If you can understand the direct relationship that architecture has to your life, you have another way of developing the confidence, faith, and self-reliance sorely needed in a world beset by doubt, suspicion, misgiving, prejudice, and hate.

I am not trying to teach you how to design your home, but rather to encourage you to develop an appreciation of a good one when you see it. The sensitive observer of the natural world finds it a place of great beauty. He prefers order, harmony, and conservation to disorder, frustration, and waste. Most of us would admit to the same preference. Yet, in actuality, we squander our physical resources in building

ugliness and confusion rather than enduring values. Simple, direct expressions of beauty in buildings are plainly good sense. We should understand more about these things. It is not a matter of taste, it is common sense. Architecture evolves directly as civilization evolves. When we find true serenity, dignity and repose in our buildings, then also will we find these qualities in our lives. There is no such thing as a noble architecture without a noble race of people.

Be aware of the materials of construction

Our first yardstick is: Observe the basic building materials. These should be as few as possible and well adapted to the climate in which they must endure. Usually the more limited the number of materials used by the architect, the greater will be his chances of producing a successful building. I recently visited a new building which utilized eight different materials in prominent locations on the exterior of the building: glass, concrete block and stucco, tile mosaic, wood siding, aluminum panels, crab-orchard stone, brick and gravel-faced block. This design didn't have a chance. The building was defeated as architecture before it even got off the drawing board. Such buildings give the impression that the designer was overwhelmed by too great an abundance of materials. With a little bit of this, a dab of that, and a smattering of another, the complete effect could only be described as a "banana split."

On the other hand, by using a limited number of materials, the architect is prodded into a unified design. Further, if the limitations extend to local indigenous materials, the structure should be quiet and properly weathered. Natural materials, used in a way to bring out their "natures," afford lasting results of beauty and durability. Weathering, as a process of nature, can be an enhancing factor rather than a maintenance cost. Even as maturity can be as attractive as youth, the world's architecture is never less appealing because of age. What a challenge to build so as to have a building actually improve in appearance after fifty years!

In recent years there has been a fetish for completely exposing the structural materials of building and glorifying the results as the only valid grammar of beauty. While structure is at the center of things architecturally, to expose it completely is not always successful. For example, steel structural frames left exposed, require frequent cleanings to remove the rust and many coats of paint as more or less temporary protection. How much more rational to increase the skin of the paint to a thicker layer of construction, be it concrete, stone, wood, or what have you! Bridges have often been eulogized as ultimate examples of form and function. Indeed, many of them are. But they are not architecture, and the constant maintenance required of steel bridges is the antithesis of enduring architecture. Some bridges are constantly being painted. By the time the painters get to one end of the bridge it is time to begin again at the other. This is not an ideal for a building of relative permanence. A building should become mellower and handsomer through the ordinary process of weathering.

Great architecture avoids the disillusionment of age

The ever-constant action of the elements are agents of constant change in the materials of construction. There must be a conscious and mighty effort on the part of designers to have nature serve their buildings well through the passage of time. By co-operating with nature, instead of trying to thwart her efforts, man learns to realize the highest values in his buildings.

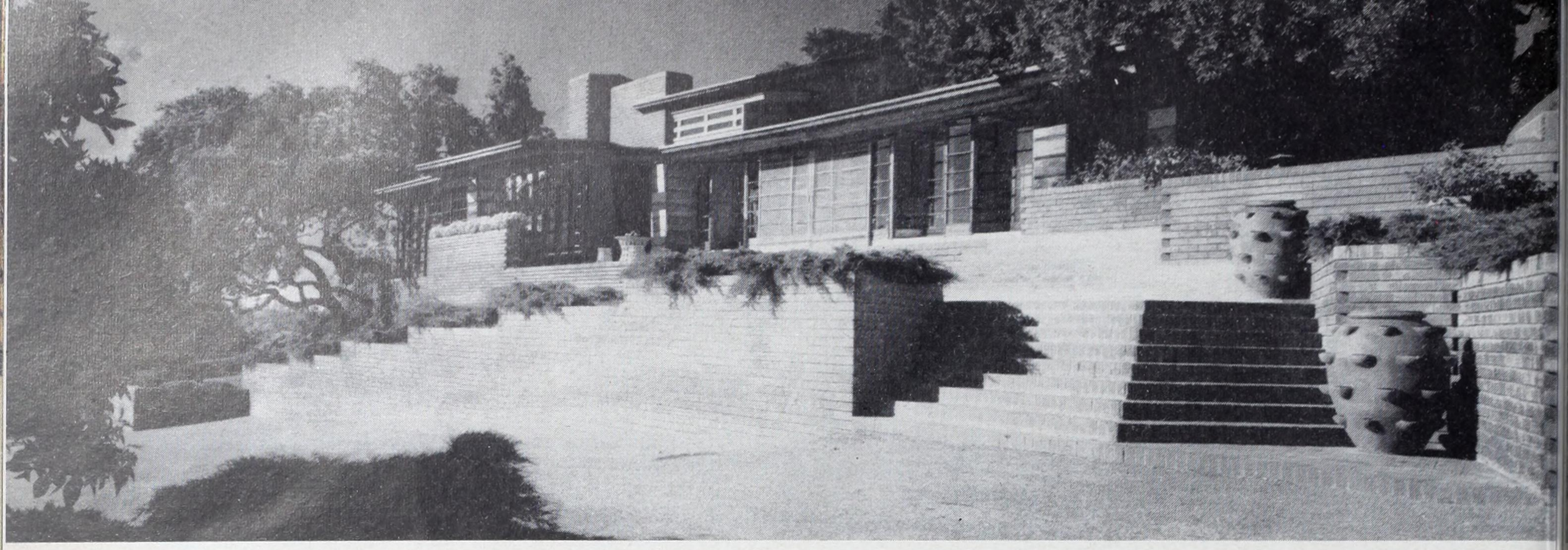
How does one learn to co-operate with nature in this sense of the weathering of the materials of buildings? Primarily it is by observation and experience. If we observe a piece of wood on an ocean beach, where we find high extremes of humidity and dryness, sun and rain, we will see that nature dries out the wood, gives it a uniform, driftwood-gray patina, and actually protects it so that its usefulness is prolonged indefinitely.

The greatest single and almost universal fault of the Modern International style is its complete lack of good weathering characteristics. This means that a great deal of money must be spent in constant maintenance. This is not only expensive but it excludes forever some of the wonderful effects that nature brings to those who attempt to co-operate with her ways. In a building, as in a nation or in a people, nature eliminates the weak and deals severely with the unfit. This truth can be apparent to us as we look at buildings. Weathering is inevitable and predictable. The weathering characteristics of any material should be justified by the way it is used in a building. No designer, no builder and no homeowner can afford to ignore the consequences of aging on his building materials.

There are many materials that age well: brick, stone, wood, concrete, copper, and bronze. All can be used in a manner so that as aging progresses they become handsomer. We should be more concerned about the durability of the structure. How much maintenance will this building require? How will it look in twenty years? This is really coming to grips with some of the positive values of architecture.

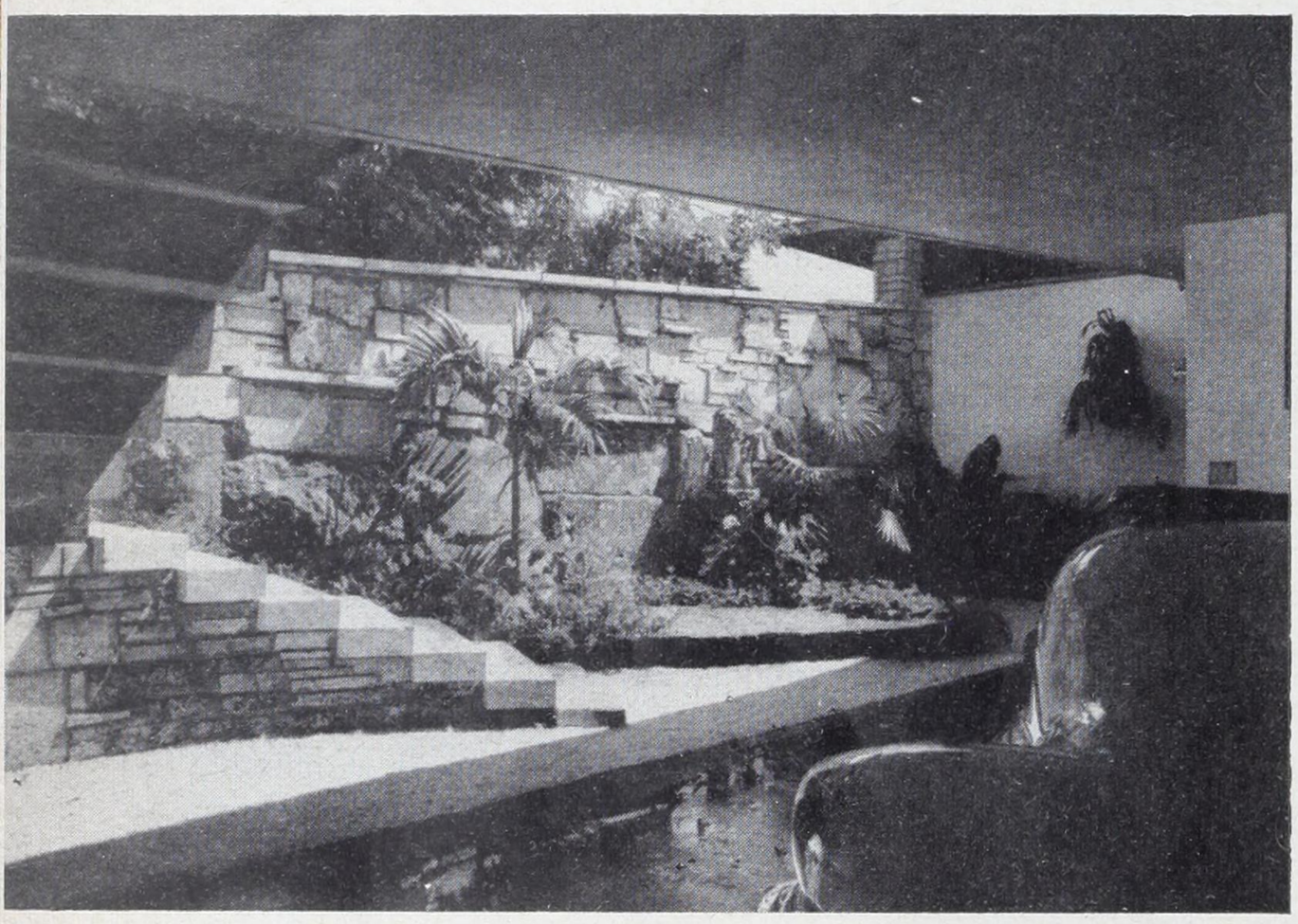
Materials should not be processed as spurious imitations. Many building materials are processed by machinery in a factory before being brought to a job. This processing should be suitable to the nature of the material. For example, let us examine the building material known as plastic laminate. These sheets are made by many manufacturers and are known under a variety of trade names. They are important products in the building industry. Because of their economy, ease of installation, durability, and attractiveness, these plastics are found in almost every home. The patterns and colors of these panels are almost limitless. Because of this possibility some panels are manufactured to look like almost every conceivable material except what they really are. Some are photographically processed to resemble marbles of all colors and descriptions. Some seem to be wood paneling in all species and types of cuts. Others are apparently weaves of linen or other types of cloth. Only by searching is a conscientious designer able to select panels that are true

(*Please turn the page*)



Brick Masonry construction of brick ages admirably, either laid in contact with the earth or as walls above ground. Left unpainted, it is virtually maintenance-free, develops an interesting patina with exposure to the weather.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, ARCHITECT



Stone Real stone comes in many colors and textures. This one, coral rock from the Florida keys, is very porous, inviting the growth of tiny air plants and mosses, so develops a fascinating color after weathering.

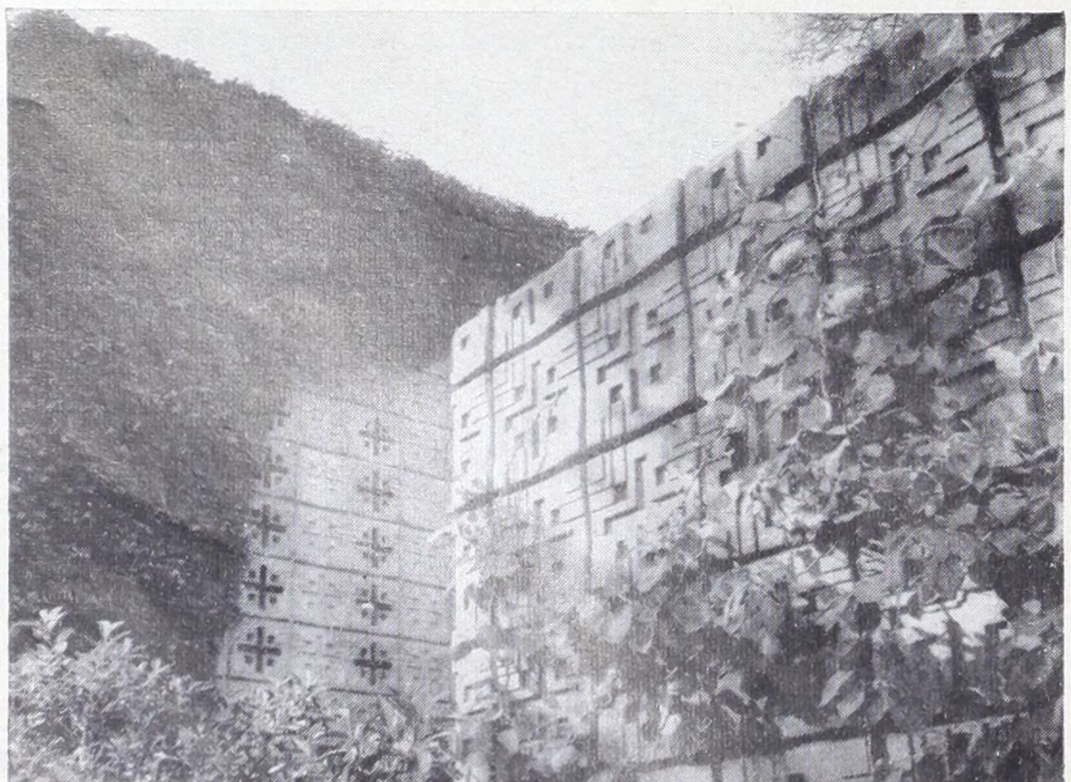
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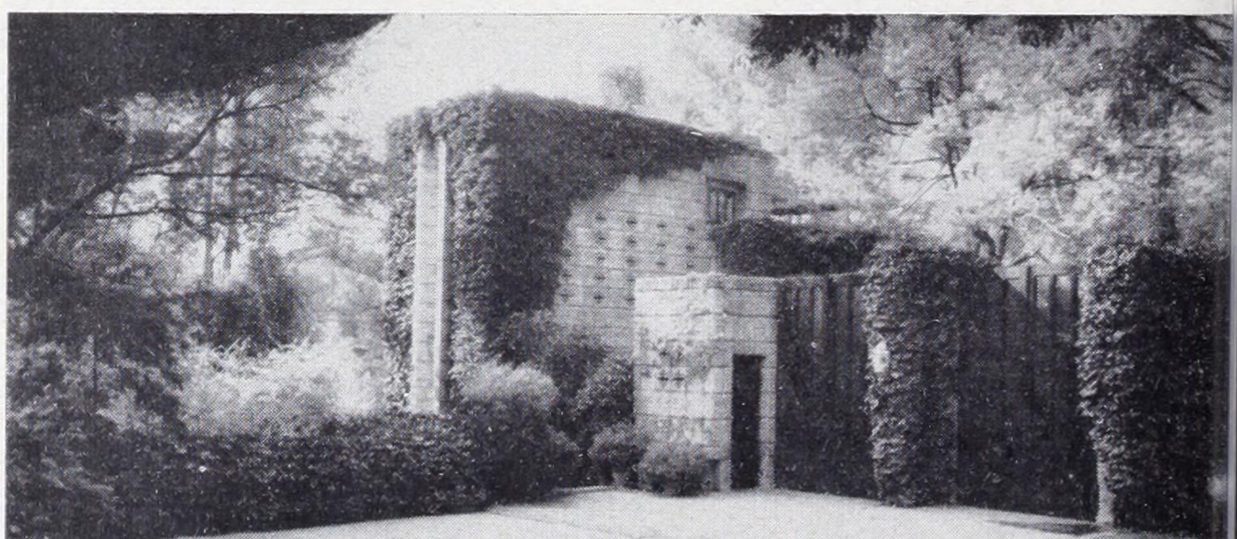


Wood

Wood has great surface character and offers great variety because of the many species. Even its irregularities (such as knots) and checking and crazing (from aging) contribute to this character.

ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT





Concrete Piercing, patterning, and molding of concrete make it an exceptionally interesting building material. Exploration of concrete's design possibilities has just begun.

to the nature of the material and do not attempt to falsely represent something else.

This honest expression of a material is important. It is impossible to achieve real building without a corresponding reality in the materials of which it is constructed. To summarize examples of phoniness in this field would fill a book. However, here is a short list to clarify this idea: mineral-surfaced asphalt paper which is scored and colored to resemble bricks; cement stucco formed and colored to resemble stone; floors that look like wood but turn out to be linoleum, complete with v-joints and wood pegs carefully embossed in the material; wallpapers that look like wood paneling or brick or stone or burlap or a variety of other things, all of which they are not.

Apply this sham test to all of the buildings you see. No building can truly succeed if its materials are false. Many are quick to applaud facile imitations, but with depth of thought we soon perceive that these imitative situations are without substance.

Form also develops from the materials of construction

The materials should be appropriate to the form in which they are used. Concrete just mixed is a plastic conglomerate which it is possible to mold into unusual shapes difficult to obtain with other materials. The ascending spiral of Frank Lloyd Wright's Guggenheim Museum is an example of monolithic unity of structure in concrete. In the early twenties, when Wright investigated the possibilities of concrete block, the lyrical results were the famous Millard house and the equally famous Ennis house, both in California. In all of his creative adventures in building, Wright invariably demonstrated his uncanny knowledge and insight into the nature of materials.

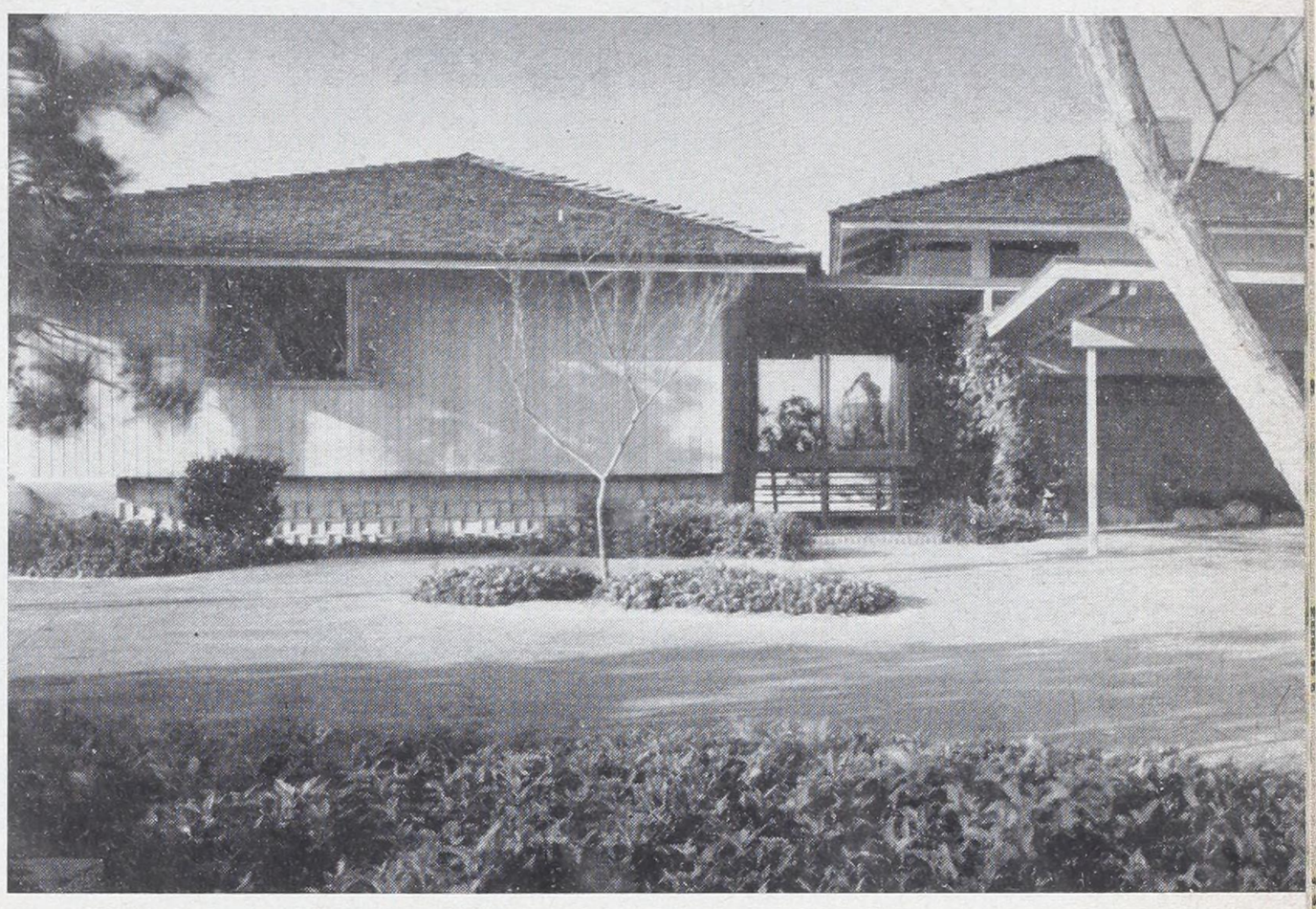
The materials and methods of construction are many and varied. The method of construction or technique should be properly adapted to the material that is used. To understand architecture, we must obtain more than a superficial knowledge of materials. We should explore the nature of a material to appreciate its proper use. For a beginning let us consider two of the commonest materials: wood and stone.

The nature of wood

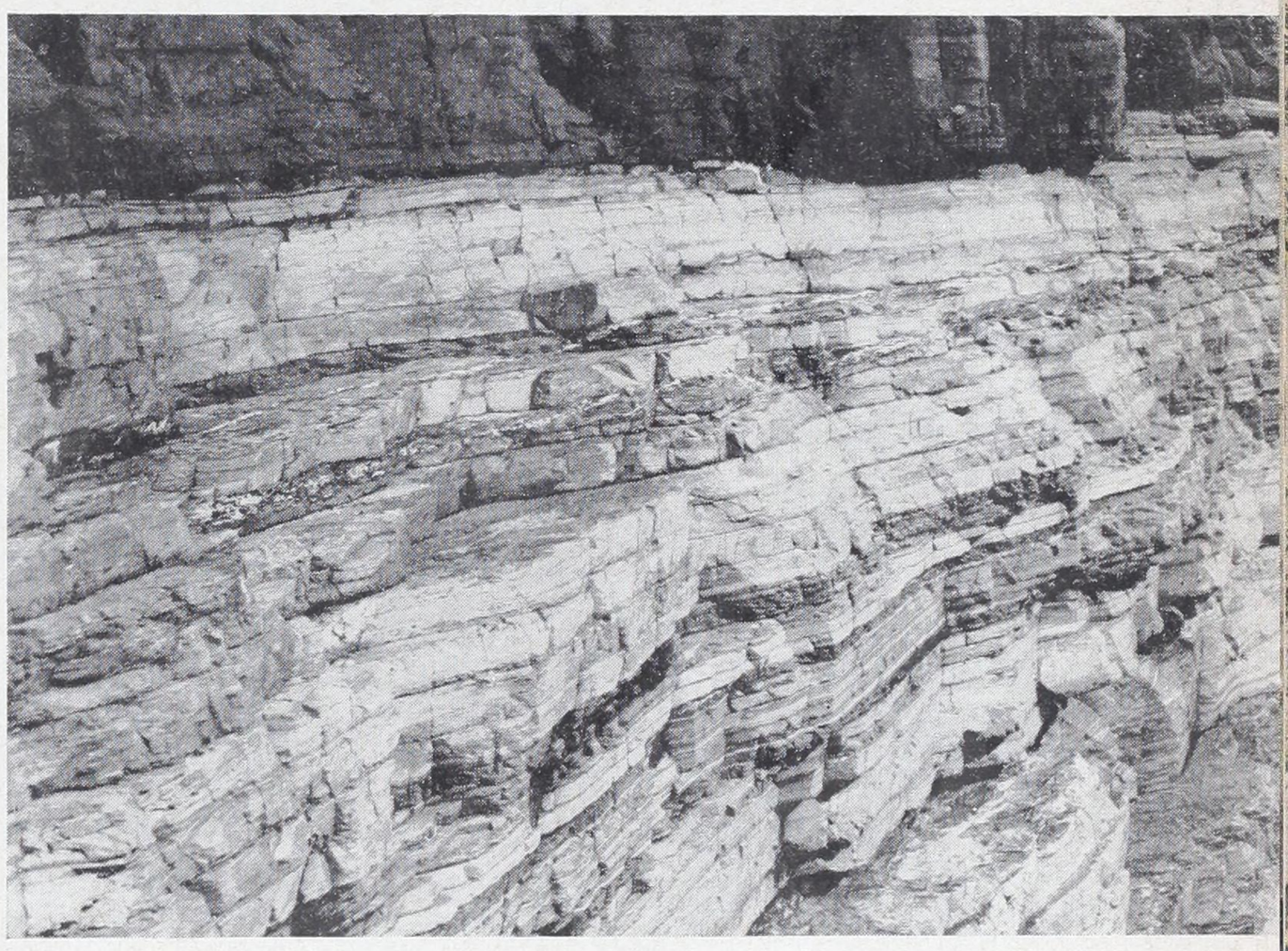
From mankind's earliest beginnings shelter was essential. Adaptations of holes, caves, and hollows gradually led to a more conscious building. Wood has held an intimate place in the memory of man. A cave with a fire burning back in its depths is still a thing of meaning to all of us. Perhaps our instincts remember the warmth, the protection, the cooking —survival—all from wood.

Wood is one of the basic materials with which we build. It is warm to the touch and has great visual appeal in its coloring and variations of grain. Wood is easily shaped and fastened in place. Properly selected and placed, it is durable and strong. The seasoning of wood is more important than the mere drying out of any water that may be in the lumber. Proper seasoning of lumber, like learning, is a process that requires time. In the Bahama (*Please turn to page* 233)

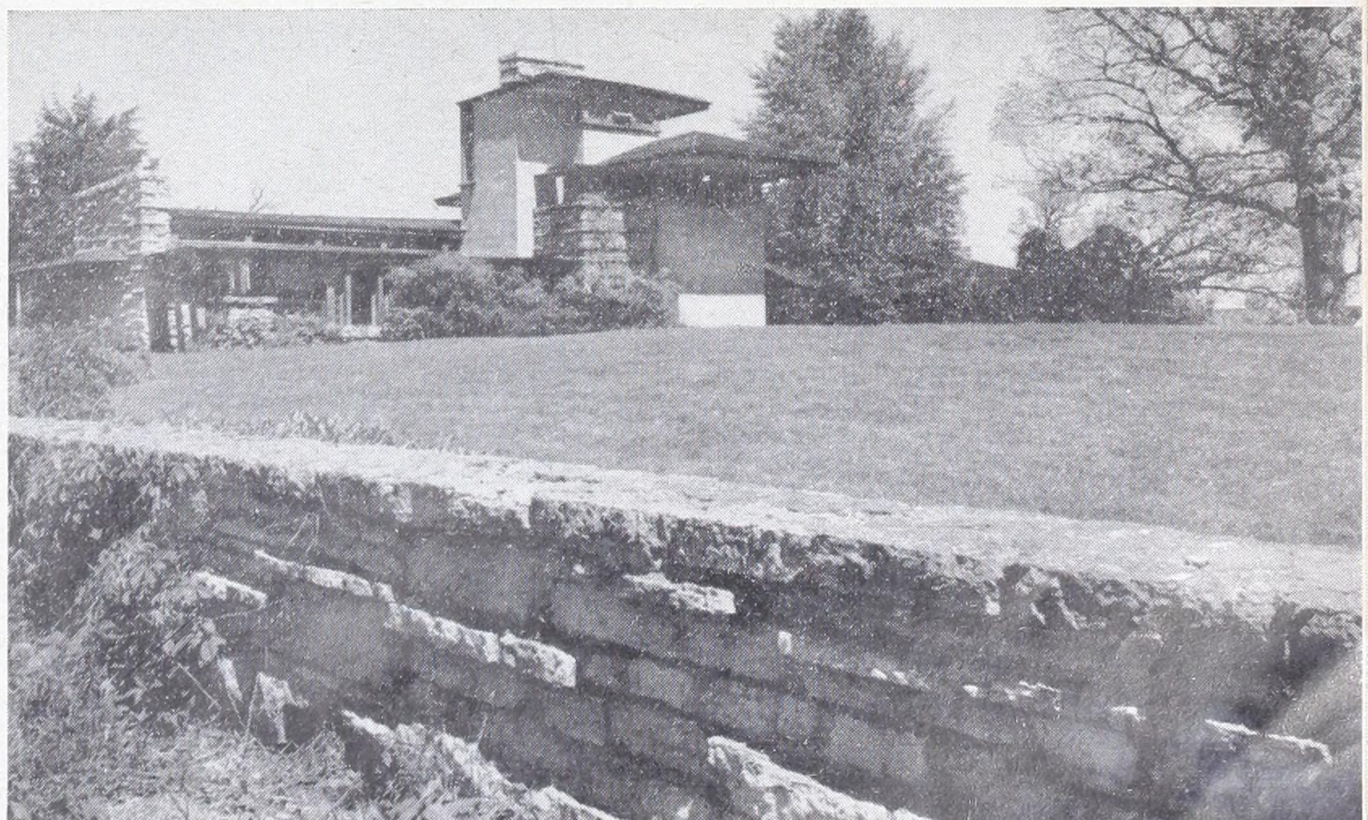
Use materials as nature uses them



It is generally considered good construction to "hang" wood vertically, letting the grain run up and down, and allowing the bottom edges to be exposed to the air. This permits the tiny channels which once carried sap to serve like chimney flues, drying it if water is driven in by rain or by hose.



Use stone in the way its strata occurred in the quarry. Let the laying of the stone echo the horizontal lines of the original. A wonderful sense of stability and repose results. Picture above shows this. Picture below shows how Frank Lloyd Wright laid stone masonry, echoing nature's laying.



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Islands natural crooks are used for boat frames, and these and other wood members are buried in the mud beneath the low tide mark so that water is always over the wood. This permits the seasoning process wherein the sap is driven out and replaced by water. After some months of this underwater seasoning the wood is removed and air dried before it is incorporated into the boat.

In building it is generally good construction to "hang" the wood vertically, and to allow the bottom edges to be exposed to the air. This permits the tiny channels which once carried sap up the tree to serve like chimney flues and to help dry out the wood if water is driven into it by rain or by hose. The disadvantages of wood may be largely overcome by proper construction and design. Termites and fungus are essential in the cycles of the earth and plants. But in our buildings we must combat them. Wood preservatives, chemicals and design are the basic means of prevention.

One of the joys of architecture can be the weathering characteristics of the work. Buildings should not require constant "manicuring" in order to appear presentable. One of the ways to avoid excessive maintenance is to anticipate the action of sun, rain, salt, sand, wind, etc. on a material and then to use that material in ways that help it age gracefully. Wood weathers to a handsome driftwood gray when exposed to the elements, and this type of finish is often desired for exterior work.

Checks, cracks and knots are not to be escaped in any extensive use of wood. These symbols of expansion and contraction, stress and growth, when anticipated and understood, become a characteristic not necessarily unpleasant. As we age, we often acquire wrinkles, but these are said to indicate character.

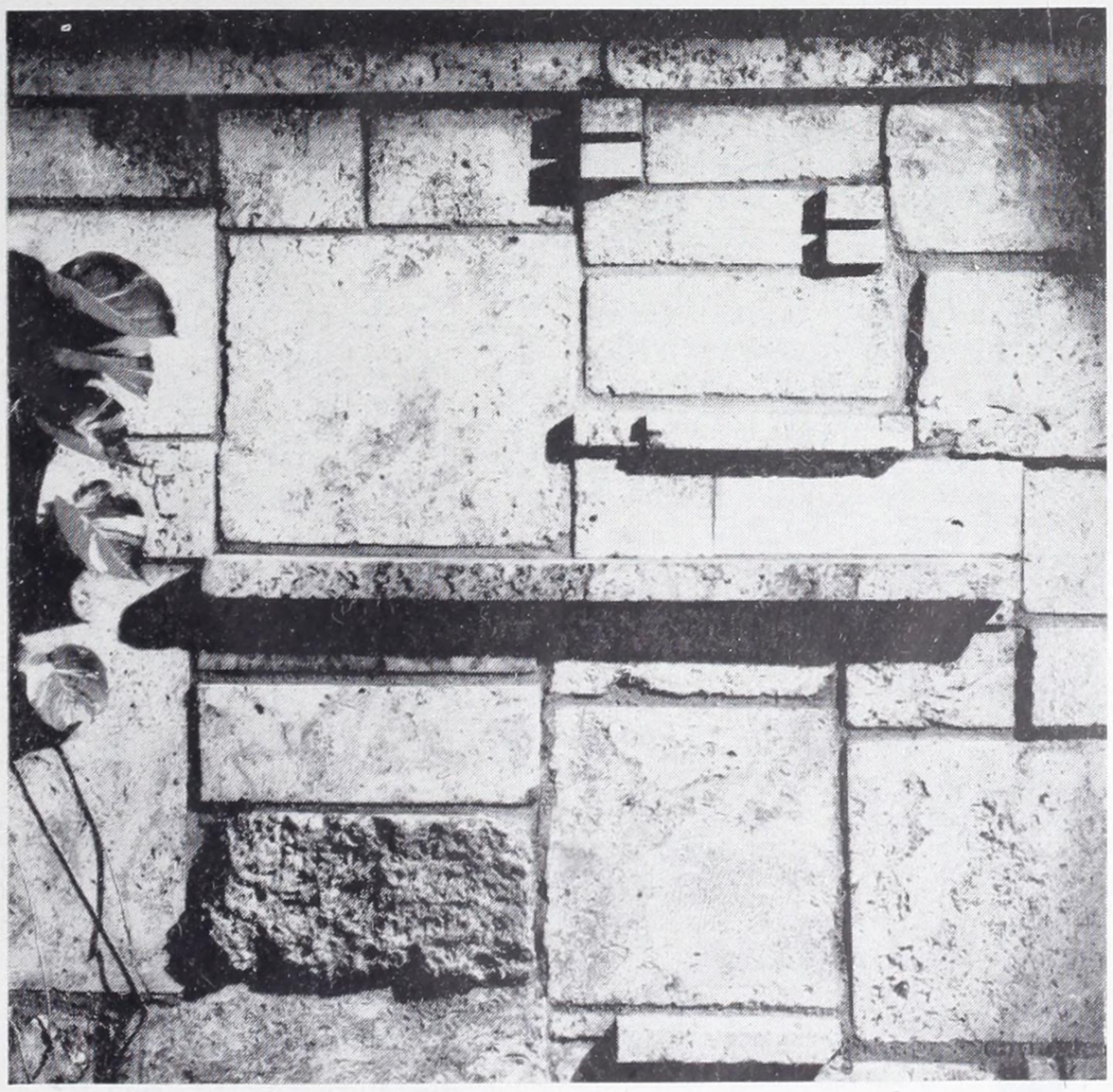
In plywood there are different considerations from the solid wood materials just discussed. A log is unrolled in very thin layers and these layers are glued back together under pressure in an odd number to reduce stresses. Plywood is a versatile, manufactured wood product. It has great strength for its weight and dimensionally is more stable than solid material. Because of the large sizes of sheets available (4′ x 8′ and larger) it can frequently be used with considerable savings in labor. It is also possible to use regular wood veneers in the first layer with cheaper wood veneers in the interior of the sandwich.

Wood has tenuity, and the principle of continuity in its use should

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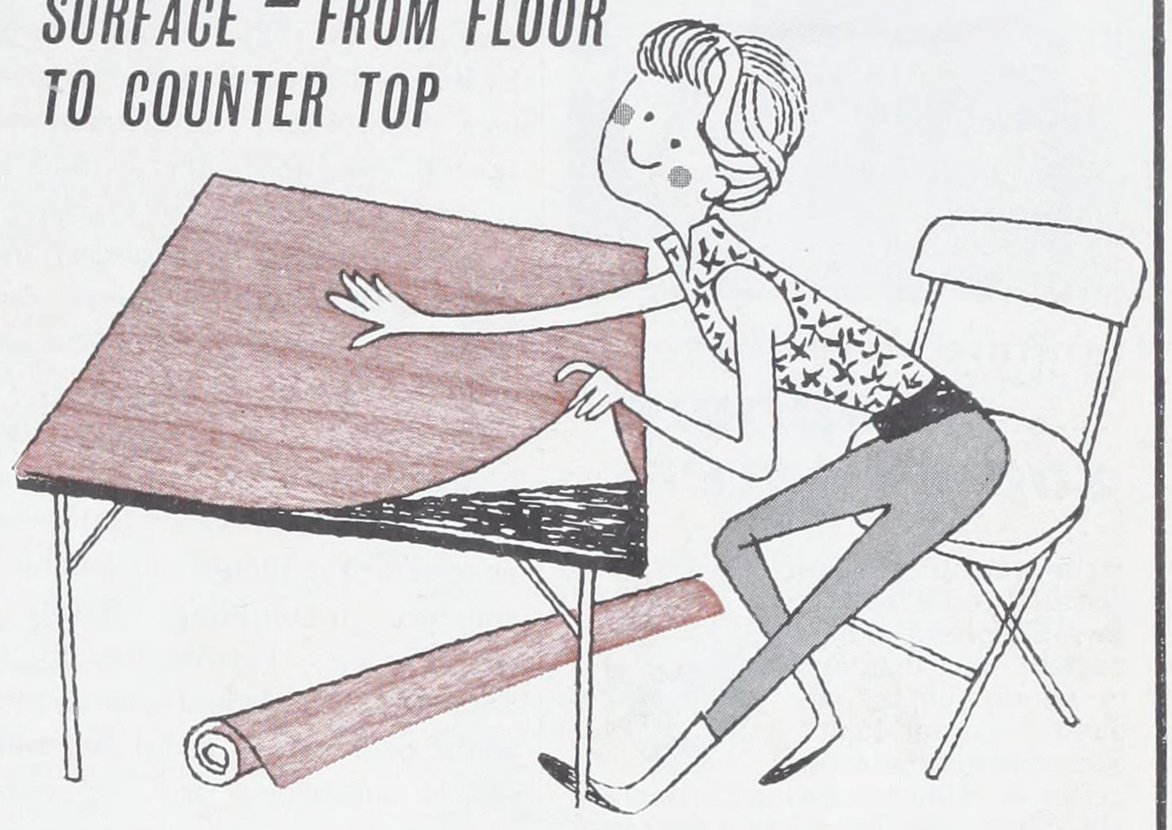
Stone and rock from different places have totally differing textures and colors. Coral rock from the keys of Florida has immense differences within its own family, yet it is unlike other stone.

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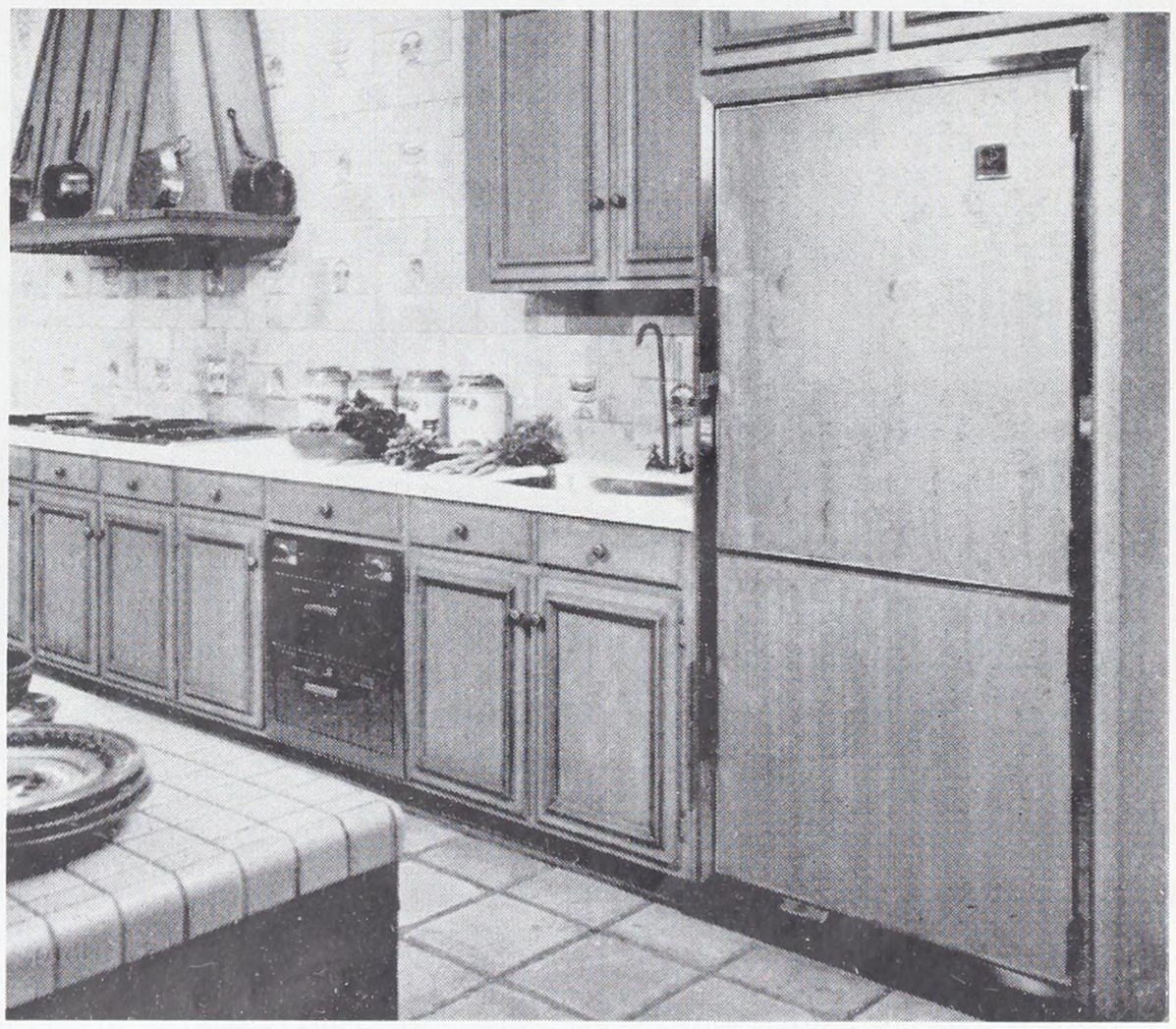
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be developed for economy. It is usually easier to fabricate small pieces of wood rather than large pieces. Woodworking machinery is available to shape and cut wood as it may be required by the architect. There may be notches and special cuts necessary so that the structure can be locked together in a sense and acquire strength from the very way that the pieces join. The joints can be further strengthened by the use of adhesives. The improved techniques of glue-laminated beams attest to the strength and durability of wood. In the very near future it should be possible to construct a building entirely of wood, using only adhesives for the assembly. This would eliminate all of the problems of metal fastenings which sometimes weaken joints, and which are subject to corrosion.

Because of the beauty of wood it has been imitated in other materials. Another example of imitation is the use of paint-graining over steel sheets. Obviously this is an abuse of the material. A sheet of paint-grained steel, no matter how cunningly fabricated with the aid of actual wood photographs, is nevertheless a fraud. To the brain behind the questioning eye it states clearly that it is a lie. This does not mean that there is anything wrong in a sheet of plastic or one of steel when they express directly what they are. It is only when they pretend to be something else that we should reject them.

Truth in materials will come out, as in other things.

Thoughts on the nature of stone

Stone is another basic building material. There is indigenous stone of one type or another in practically all parts of the United States. While some are more durable than others, all possess considerable endurance when used where they are quarried. For example, Florida quarry keystone is a porous but handsome limestone found in the Florida Keys. It has great interest on its face when sawn apart. Often sections of large "brain coral" are exposed to view, as well as fossil remains of many kinds of prehistoric animal and plant life. This stone has been used throughout South Florida and weathers beautifully, sometimes acquiring a green patina from the growth of tiny plants. This stone, which behaves well in its own general environment, would split and crumble miserably when subject to the erosion and action from ice and cold, smoke and smog of a city located in the north.

So look for native stone for economy, durability and beauty. What else could you wish for in a building material? It is silly to ship Tennessee flagstones to Florida and have Florida flagstones sent to North Carolina, though of course this has been done.

Stone is massive. It begs to be heaped in great piles. If you would like to learn how stone should be laid, take your lesson from the quarry. Go to the quarry and study the strata of the rocks. Observe the vein of the stone, the way it splits off, then build your wall in imitation of the way it comes from the ground. Invariably, horizontal lines dominant the quarry wall. When this horizontality is echoed in a building wall, there is a great and wonderful stability and repose that results. The strength of a stone structure is obvious.

Primitive peoples of all lands have recognized the dignity of the material and have used it for their best building efforts. The ancient builders of Egypt have never been surpassed in their understanding of the nature of stone. The Mayas were equally adept. Both used the trabeated or post and lintel system of stone construction. The arch form developed in stone by the Romans helped them realize great variety and boldness of plan. This round or semi-circular arch was also characteristic of the Romanesque period. In the Gothic development you discovered stone structures utilizing the pointed arch. The Gothic mason, using laws of elasticity and equilibrium, constructed their cathedrals with a stability that depends upon the fine adjustment of thrust and counterthrust.

The Greeks built relatively small buildings from huge stones. The Gothic architects built very large buildings with small stones!

"Sticks and stones" is an expression well known to us. While other materials, such as concrete, steel, aluminum and glass are used in increasing amounts, it is not likely that "sticks and stones" will ever be completely replaced. Wood and masonry, either singly or in combination, have been man's greatest material resources.

As construction materials develop, we find changes in the methods of building. Since architecture will always derive directly from its materials and methods of construction, we may expect to find a new architecture created from the new

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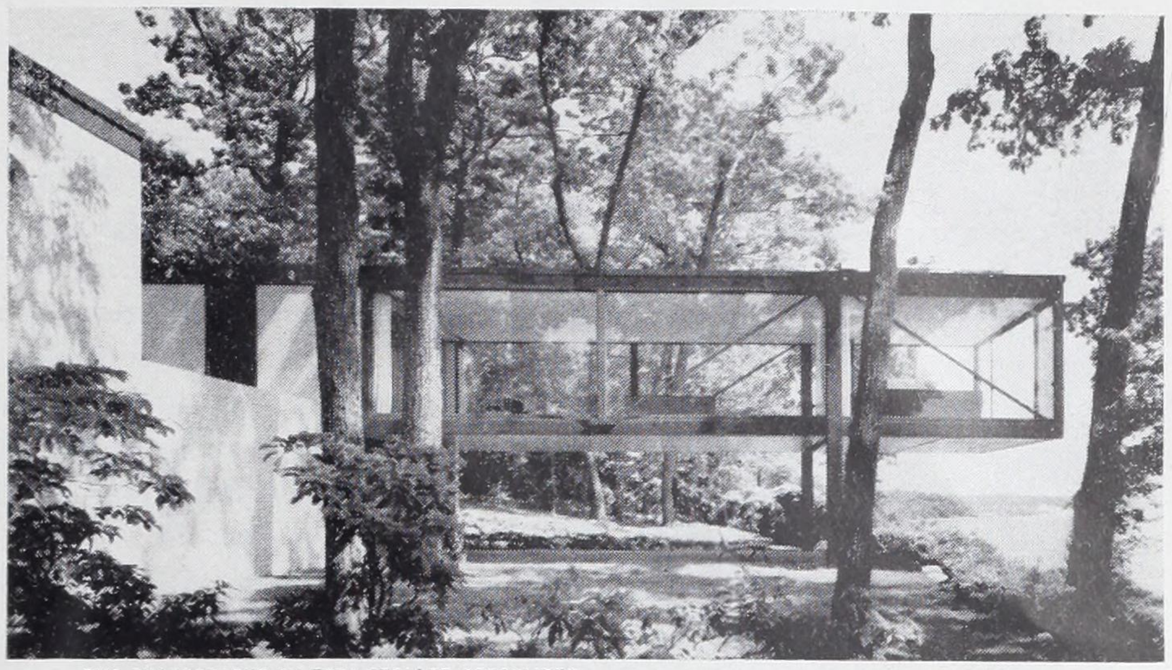
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Glass has often been used in wondrous ways, but always in small pieces. Today's great sheets of glass open new possibilities but at the same time present handicaps as to glare, heat (both loss and gain), and privacy. Its greatest good is a new intimacy with the outdoors.

resources of our Machine Age. Already the buildings of this generation utilize steel, aluminum, concrete and glass to an extent never before possible.

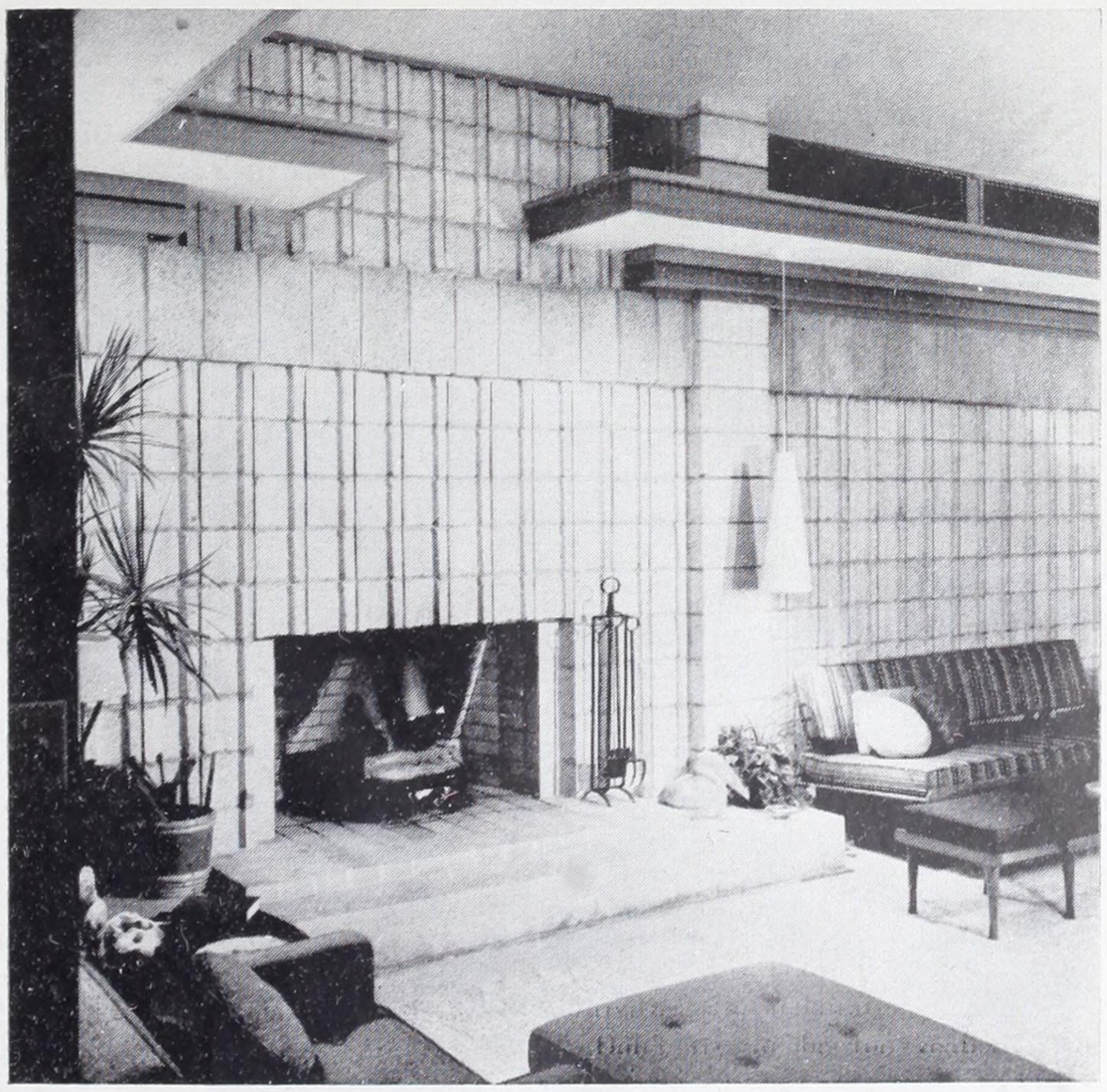
The cathedral builders of the Middle Ages used glass in a wondrous way, but always in small bits and pieces limited by the manufacturing process. Today we produce great sheets of plate glass with which to form an entire wall. As the sheet of glass has become larger, so also have the distances spanned by girders and beams to accommodate this glass.

With the use of super-sized materials, glass for example, the hazard and penalty of breakage is increased. The design problem insofar as glare, heat (both loss and gain), fresh air and privacy is magnified. Obviously there are wonderful advantages to compensate for these difficulties. Probably the greatest good comes from the effect of space that can be created by exploding a boxlike form into outer space resulting in the widely publicized indoor to outdoor idea.

In architecture, both to the creator and appreciator alike, there must come invariably a sort of sense of wonder as well as pleasure at being able to take the materials of the earth and pile them up into spaces that can affect one's emotions. While there is both reality and finality in the nature of the materials of which we build, there is at the same time a continuing

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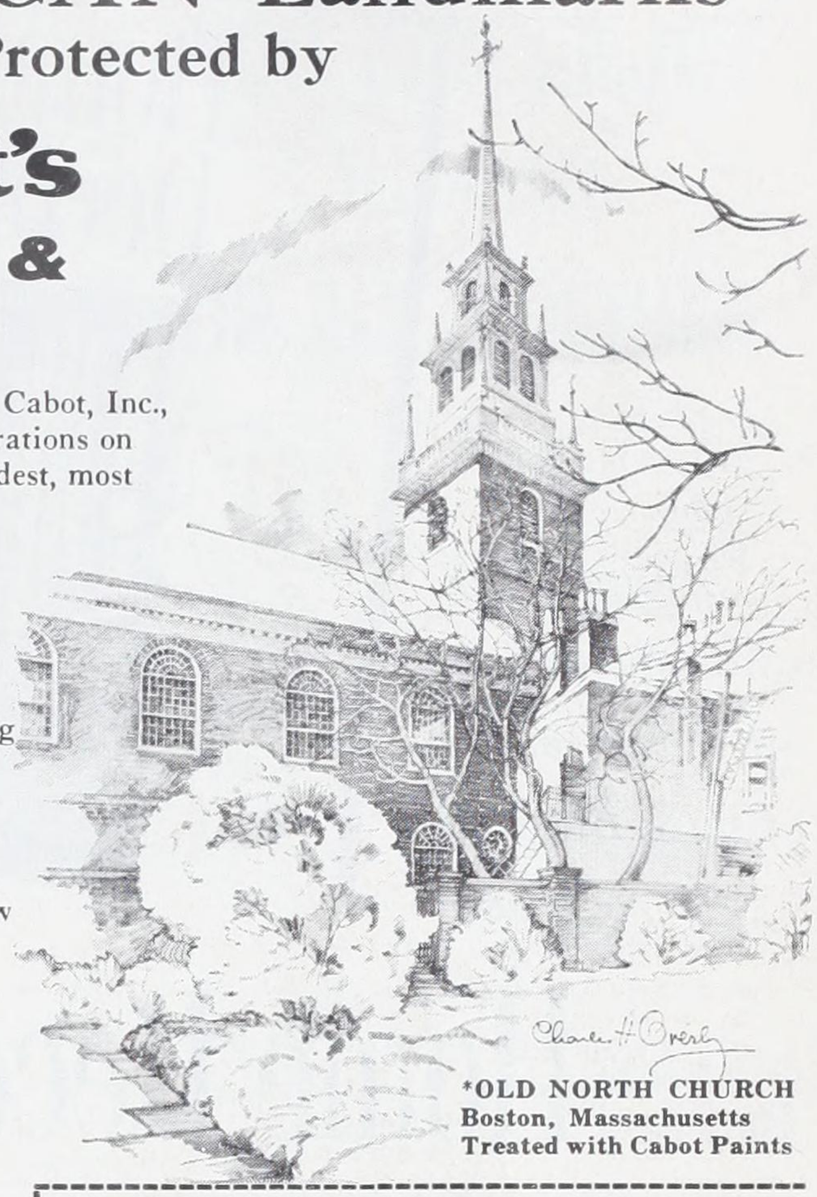
A designer who is sensitive to materials can find design opportunities in the commonest and cheapest of materials, such as concrete block. This wall uses stock concrete block, laid with ends exposed.



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YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE

challenge to explore the nature of these materials. It is our ability to translate the sense of wonder into the reality of our materials that creates architecture. Architecture gives you the sense of all parts belonging. "Oneness" is perhaps a good term to use to describe this quality. This unity is achieved not only by the handling of the spaces in their voids, solids, their proportions, but also in the selection and use of materials. Remember, the more limited the number of materials that are used in a building, the greater will be the sense of oneness that results from such a building.

Does the building fulfill the need for which it was planned?

A measurement we must make in determining architecture is that of use. A building with a satisfactory arrangement of spaces is usually a matter of common sense, and the planning of any building can be checked by using common sense. In studying a building from the standpoint of use, attempt to study the large things first and then worry about the details. Far better that a designer get the large, broad, general aspects of his design properly solved, even if he slips up on some of the smaller, specific, insignificant parts of a project. Obviously the ideal is to have all things as close to perfection as possible. However the yardstick of use should be applied first to the broad and general, and then to the particular.

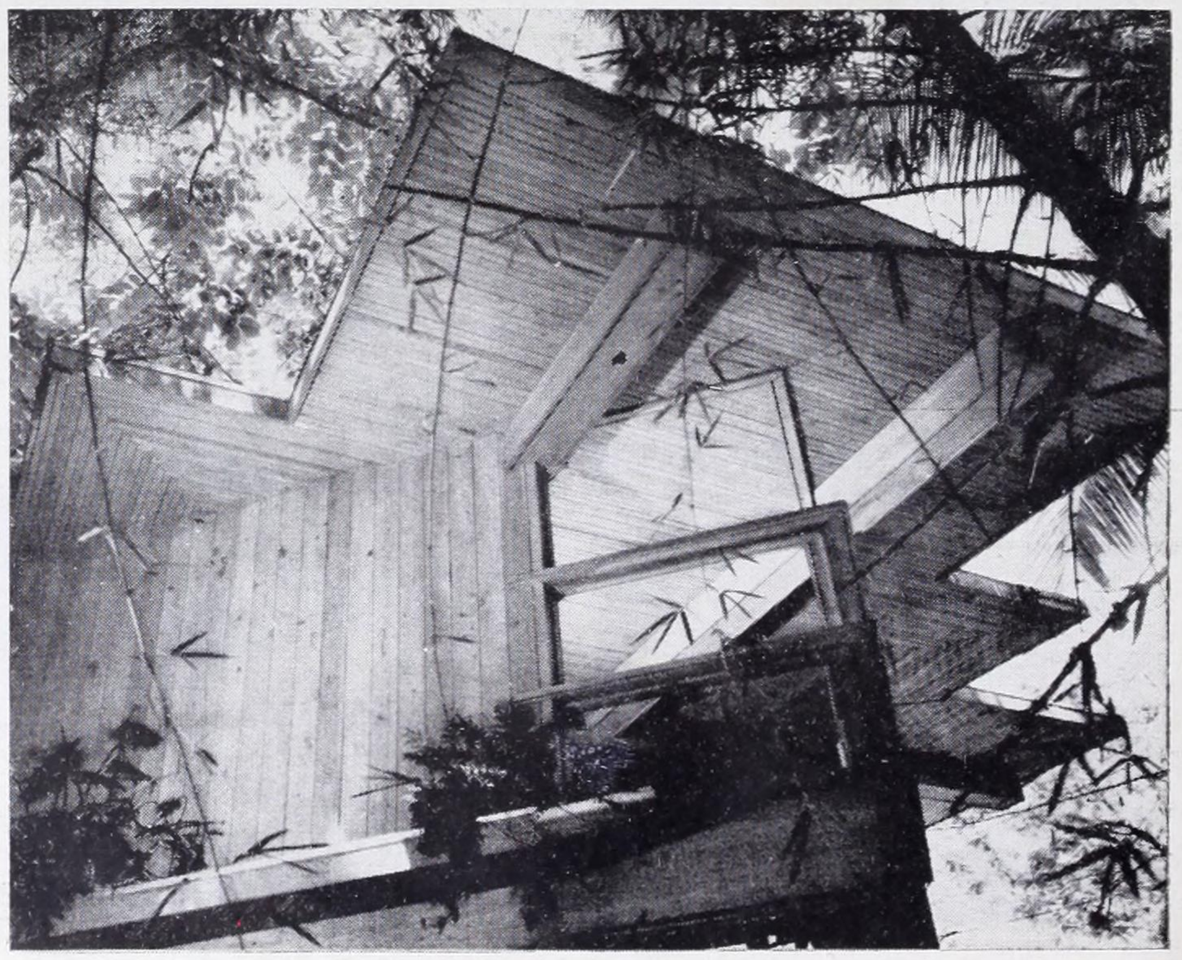
While use is predicated on more than an arrangement of spaces on a sheet of paper, it is helpful in judging how well a building can be used if we are able to study the plan of the building. A plan is merely a convention of drawing. Of course, we never see a building in this form, unless by some accident a building was sheared by an explosion blowing the top part off and we are able to fly over the remaining section in a helicopter and look straight down. However, this is unlikely and even under such circumstances our eyes would not be perpendicular to every point of the building as we assume in a plan.

There is no better means of understanding a building that we walk through than to have available at the same time a plan of the building. Many aspects of the architecture then become clear and we may study the arrangement of spaces, circulation of people, and other things that affect the use of a building. The reality of a building springs from the interior spaces, even as a plant unfolds and grows from a seed.

If we see the plan of a building drawn in relation to the entire site so it is clear about the relation of the building to the surrounding grounds, trees, lake, streams, roads or any other features of the terrain, then you get the total picture. The skill with which a building is

An all-wood structure may exploit the tenuity of wood. By using wood continuously throughout it is possible to lock all parts together so the whole structure gains strength from the very way the pieces join. The wood joints can also be strengthened by adhesives.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EZRA STOLLER ASSOCIATES



fitted into its surroundings is an important aspect of its use which must not be overlooked. This has special meaning in this day with our need for parking and maneuvering of automobiles. Plans which only show the walls and what is contained therein do not tell the whole story.

No one who wishes to understand architecture should fail to learn how to read a plan.

Engineering fitness

The science or engineering of a building must be first rate if it is to be architecture. The structure should be sound and adequate for any and all loading conditions to which it might be subjected. Heating, ventilating and cooling must be properly solved and installed. The roof should form a dry shelter, and the walls and windows should adequately fulfill their functions. Materials should be selected of a quality consistent with their location and use, and with full awareness that a cheap material is often an expensive one if it requires continuous maintenance and replacement. The methods of construction should be proper for the materials used. The plumbing should work properly, the electrical service should be of proper capacity, and there should be adequate lighting and convenience outlets for all necessary purposes. The workmanship should indicate the best qualities of the craftsman and the whole building should give the impression of a good job well done. All this should be obvious, but it is amazing how often such matters are overlooked.

Acoustics

A practical consideration in any building is that of acoustics. This is simply the control of sound by the design of the building and by the use of the materials of construction. Some consideration must always be given to the control of sound. The noises in a kitchen should be reduced so that the clash of pots and pans does not reverberate and echo into other living spaces of the home.

While acoustical engineers can greatly increase the architectural efficiency of any space by the use of baffles, reflecting boards, sound absorbent materials, these corrective measures frequently indicate a second-rate architectural design job. Architectural designers frequently rely upon the acoustical engineer to get them out of the traps into which preconceived building shapes lead them. The Chicago Auditorium designed by Louis Sullivan in the 1880's is still acoustically one of the most perfect auditoriums ever built in this country. There was a conscious and extreme effort made by this architect and his partner, Dankmar Adler, to achieve fine acoustics. Acoustical considerations will frequently determine the form for rooms or spaces. There is no excuse for buildings in which proper acoustical qualities are not carefully considered.

Mechanical and electrical

In the related fields of plumbing, heating and air conditioning and electrical equipment, the architect and builder spend a large proportion of the owner's building dollars. A demand for more equipment in buildings has greatly increased the need for proper integration of the mechanical and electrical equipment to the structure. In smaller work such as residential work, the architect in his own office will frequently perform all of the design and drafting required for the execution of the job. However, in the case of a large building or a very expensive home, it is to the best interest of the client to bring in specialists, mechanical and electrical engineers, who can properly determine the extent and nature of the job required and then specify in detail the equipment which will accomplish those purposes.

With the tremendously increased public demand for greater comfort and more conveniences in buildings, there has developed an increased task of integrating all of these mechanical parts into the structure. As a general rule of thumb, it can be stated that the more you are completely unaware of the existence or location of this mechanical equipment, the better the job of integration that has been done. As a corollary to this integration, it is always gratifying to see a building in which all of the services, telephone, and power lines have been run underground to the building without a series of poles and unsightly wires dropping down to some roof location and from there into the building. The more inconspicuous all of these necessary, but frequently not too handsome, bits and pieces of equipment the more successful the job.

The use of electricity in most buildings today has jumped many times ahead of its usage ten to twenty years ago. Widespread use of kitchen appliances and equipment, television, radio, air conditioning, high fidelity phonograph

(*Please turn the page*)



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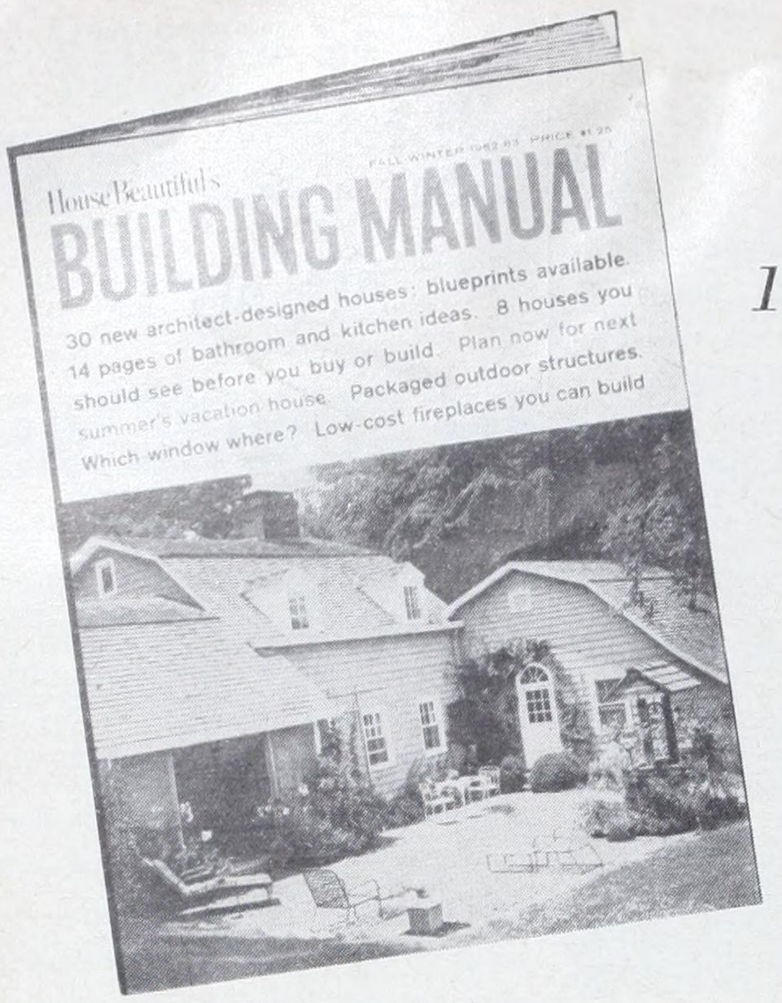
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YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

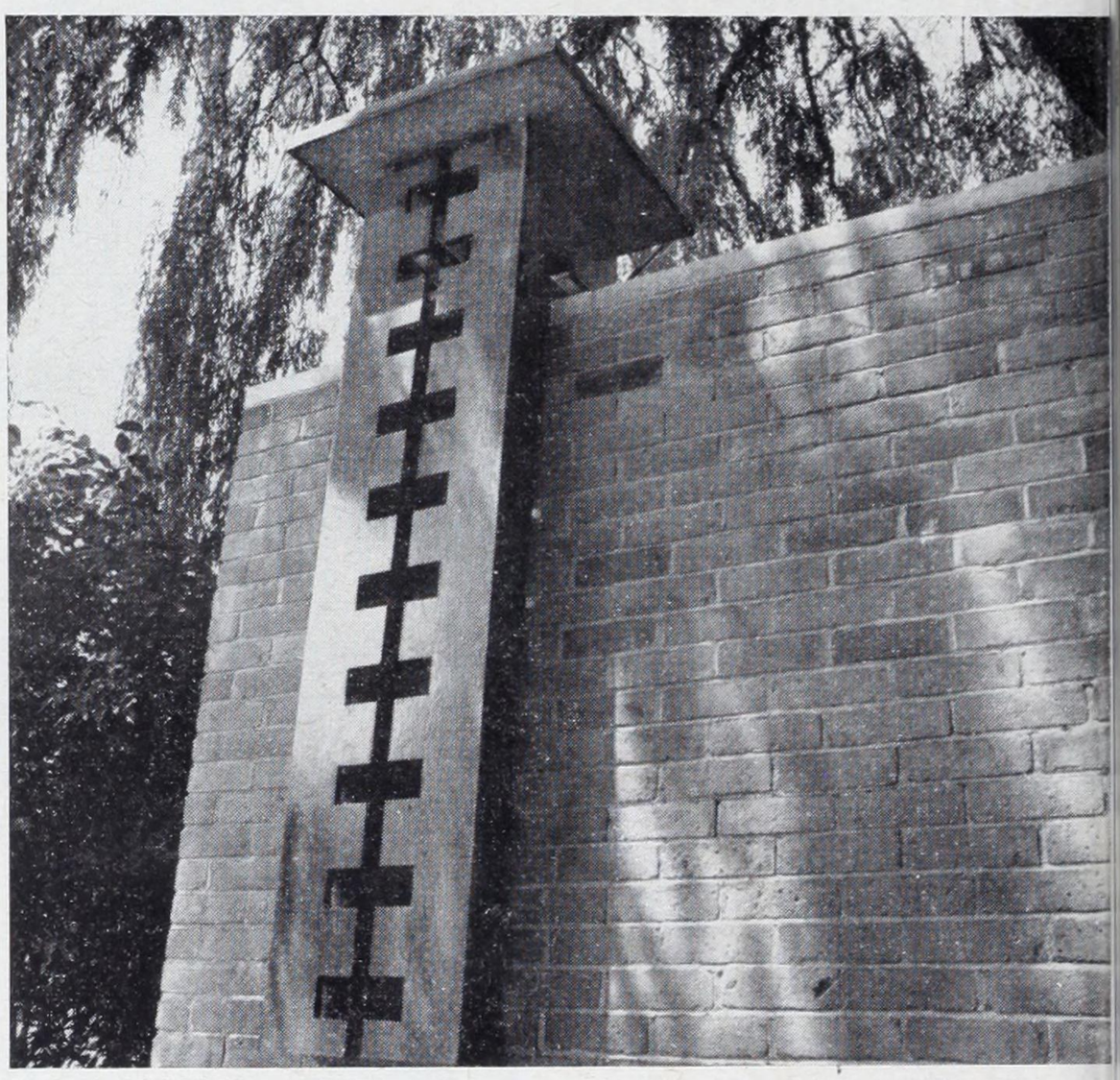
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sets, etc. produce an electrical load far in excess of what was considered normal requirements a few years ago. Before World War II most homes were built with a sixty ampere electrical service. Today rarely ever is a home built with less than a hundred ampere service and two hundred ampere services are commonplace. This electrical power can be a great servant. However, integration is the keynote in having it serve as handsomely in our structures. Lighting, for example, is much more effective if it is built into the structure of the building rather than tacked on or hung as an appurtenance or afterthought. Built-in lighting can take many forms and need not always be the cove which dimly illuminates the ceiling and casts a pall of gloom rather than a pleasant light over the individuals in the room.

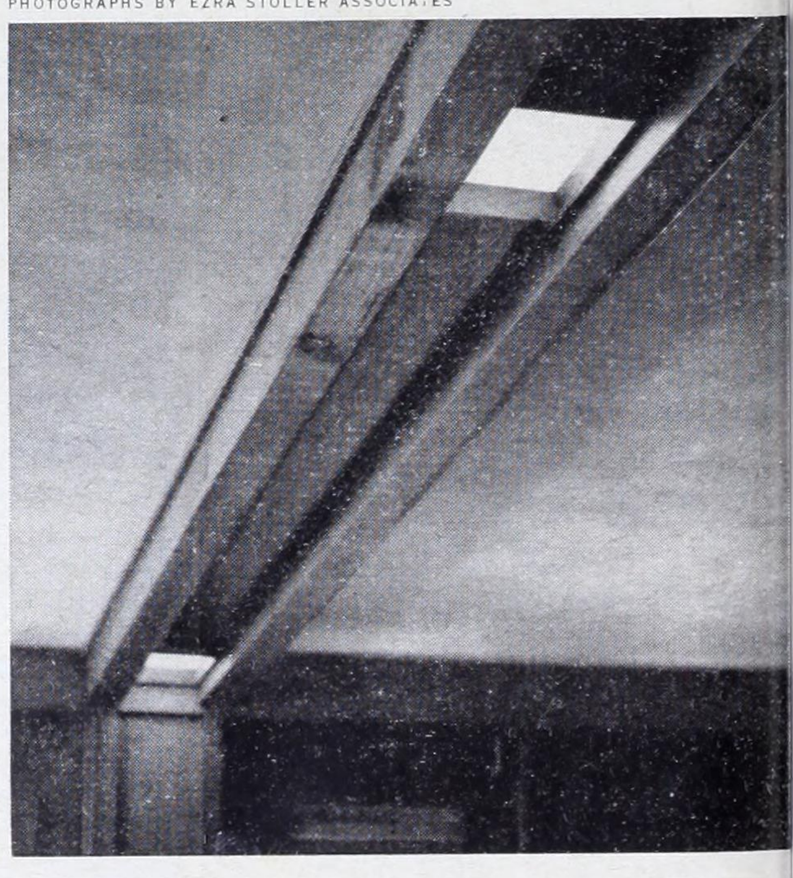
Electrical receptacles should be numerous and properly spaced for convenience. However, if they are placed in inconspicuous locations and hidden from sight as much as possible, the over-all architectural effect will be improved.

A building may express a bold, imaginative dramatic idea. This structural excitement may be found among effects of quietness, repose, serenity, dignity, and calm. To achieve this understatement requires the greatest skill in the very practical matters of putting the "insides" into a structure so that they do not show.

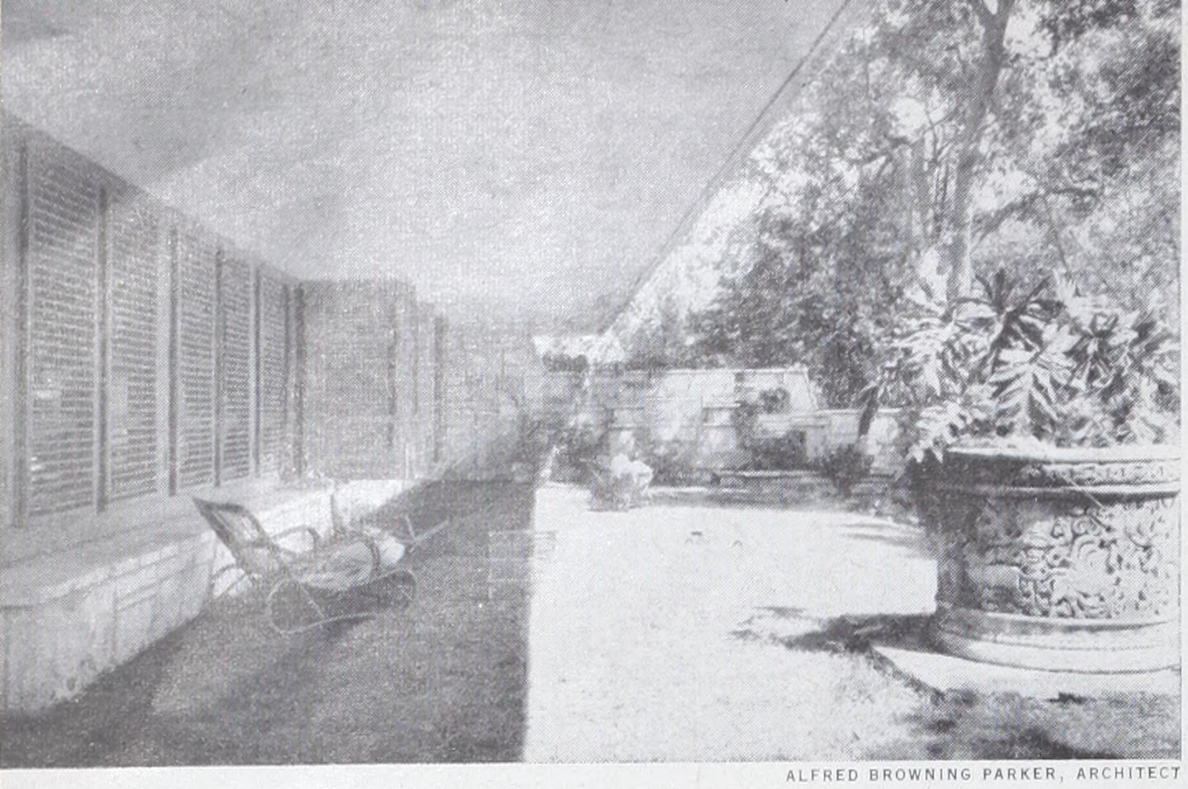
The proof of success can be directly observed by you in the building. You can see, hear, and feel how well the problems have been solved.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA STOLLER ASSOCIATES



Lighting is more effective if it is built into the structure of the building rather than tacked on, or hung on as an after-thought or an appurtenance. Entrance light on a wall, above, echoes the dimensions of the bricks in wall behind. At right, ceiling lights are integrated into the beams.



ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT

Like the sombrero, the wide overhang plays a protective role for houses built in the heat and glare of the Southern sun.



GEORGE W. W. BREWSTER, ARCHITECT

In northern latitudes it makes good sense to use the sun's warmth in winter, allowing it to penetrate deep into the house.

Four more yardsticks for judging a house

Second of a continuing series to help you tell a good house from a bad one. From a forthcoming book, *You and Architecture*

By ALFRED BROWNING PARKER

The Yardstick of Climate

● Climate considerations should be a major factor in shaping our buildings. No matter where you build, each location makes its own demands in terms of requirements for the particular climate.

It is obvious that a building in the tropics should differ from a building in the northern temperature zone. It is less obvious, however, that even in the same area there are microclimates (or miniature differences) which should be recognized in the design and construction of buildings. In any big city we find summer heat, aggravated by vast areas of paving and large and massive buildings, while at the same time in the outlying green suburbs, with a predominance of trees and grass, there will be considerably lower temperature—all within a few miles of each other.

Trees, shrubs, vines, and grass have a great influence on local weather conditions. Trees will give up moisture in very dry weather and they will absorb excess moisture on days of high humidity. This tends to equalize temperatures. So plantings are, in a sense, a form of natural air conditioner serving to balance out and extend the comfort range of temperature and humidity at any given point.

The function and form of a dwelling must of necessity spring from the environmental conditions. A home in a desert country of Arizona or New Mexico could well utilize a principle of evaporative cooling by keeping a layer of water on the roof. In the dry country this can effectively contribute to the comfort of the inhabitants. The same procedure, followed in a region equally hot but of high humidity, such as south Florida, would be of little advantage.

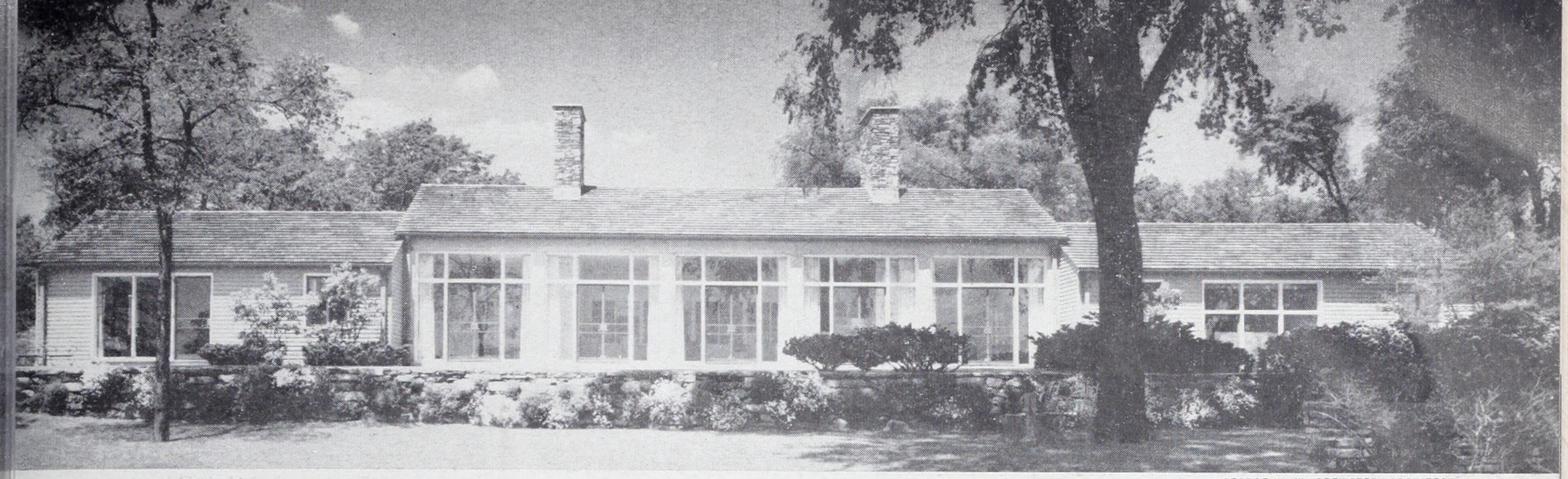
In the southern countries of the world men wear a wide brimmed hat or sombrero in order to shield their eyes from the glare of the sun as well as to afford shade protection from the heat. In the northern latitudes men wear hats with very small brims, or no brim, as witness the parka of the Eskimos.

So it should be with the roof of your home. In a southern climate with great heat and glare of the sky, it is appropriate to have wide overhanging roofs, whereas in the northern latitude the sun is frequently wanted, and roofs are designed to permit often extensive penetration.

We have always sought to control our environment in a manner that would avoid the extreme shocks of heat and cold. This control will undoubtedly continue to increase in both quantity and quality. Anyone who has tried to sleep in a bedroom which is like an oven at certain times of the year and like a refrigerator at other times, can certainly voice a loud "amen" to environmental controls. (The ideal bedroom might be one from which all light and sound could be excluded yet maintain proper air movement, humidity, and temperature.)

Climatological data can be valuable in designing for any given location. United States Weather Bureaus often have information collected from 25 to 50 years about a given city. By studying this data it is possible to evolve a pattern of what to expect month by month and to design buildings to cope with the extremes of nature that occur in a given area.

HOUSE BEAUTIFUL magazine sponsored and published a series of climatological data sheets for 15 different climate zones. These climatological charts contain information concerning the prevailing wind directions, extremes of wind velocity, rainfall, temperatures, humidity, heat falling on vertical and horizontal surfaces, sun angles, and hours of sunshine for every day of every month in the year. Climate control charts are a genuine tool with which the owner and his architect may produce buildings which at least soften the



GEORGE W. W. BREWSTER, ARCHITECT

Regional architecture is a necessity because of variations in climate. A sensitive designer uses materials and forms suggested by the enduring building in a locale. Here, the New England add-on house is done with contemporary windows.

weather extremes and solve the daily comfort problems posed by weather conditions.

When you make even a cursory examination of climate control charts just for a few sections of these United States, you quickly come to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a single building type that is adequate and proper to use in all sections. You are brought to the realization that regional architecture is a necessity. Without it we must pay too high a price in discomfort and or engineering expense. When we build in this regional sense, it is almost instinctive for a sensitive designer to use materials and forms that are suggested by the enduring buildings in the locale. Certainly this does not imply a blind copying of the past. Fresh, imaginative designs may achieve harmony with architecture of the past only with skill, not genuflection.

I believe in regional buildings, even building for the micro-climates within the region. I resent the efforts of anyone who applies one pat formula to all buildings in all places. It is a perfectly natural thing to take into account local climatic conditions in designing and building. Every primitive race of historical record has made a real effort and achieved a satisfactory solution to the problems posed by their climate. Today, with our engineering resources, we can ignore the climate, but this is not conducive to architecture and it is also needlessly expensive. Architecture recognizes climatological needs. Architecture creates adequate solutions to the problems posed by weather. To study and use principles of climate control in buildings is obviously such a common-sense matter that we should be very puzzled by the vast number of buildings in which this awareness and application has been neglected.

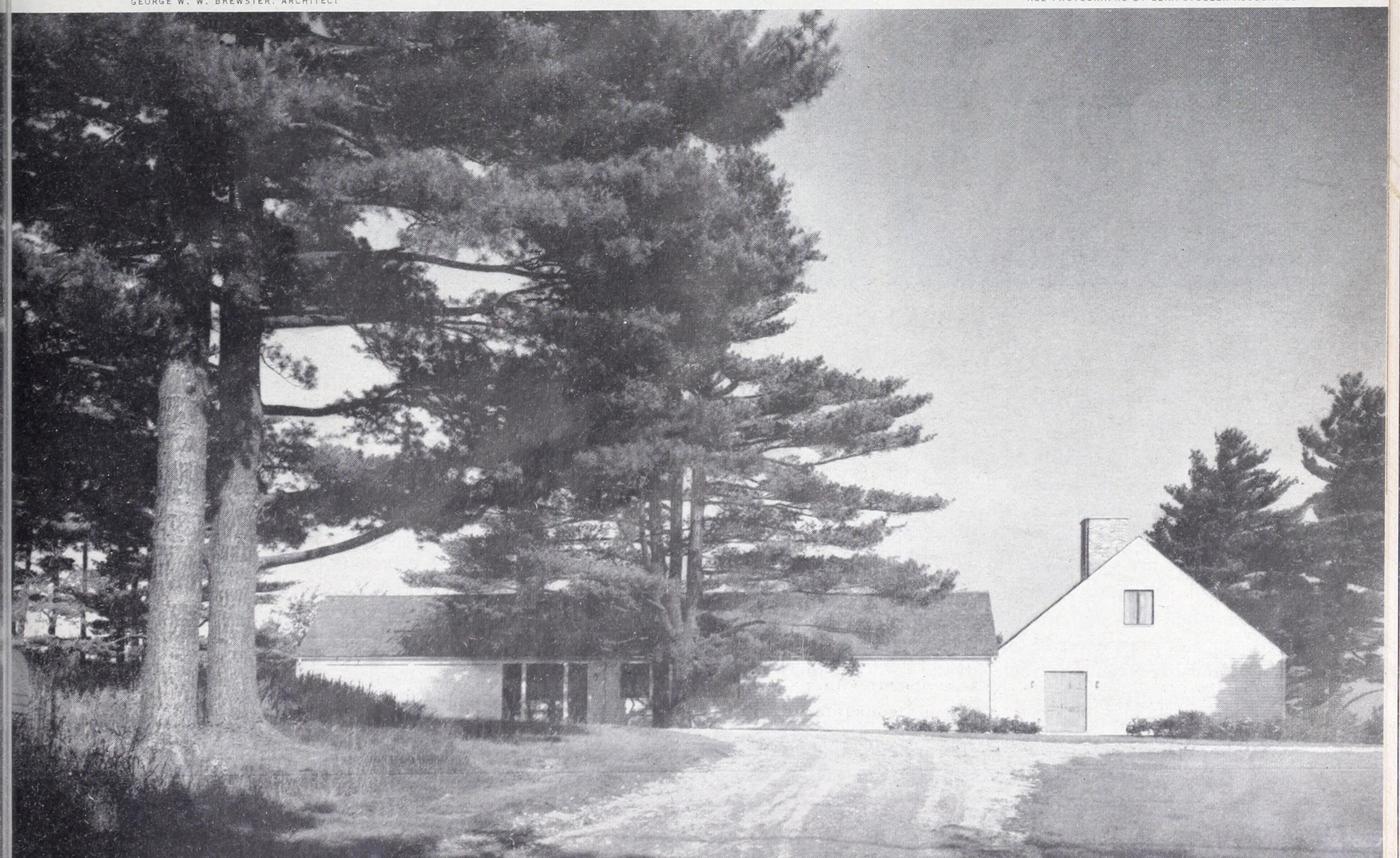
It is a little known but demon- (*Please turn the page*)

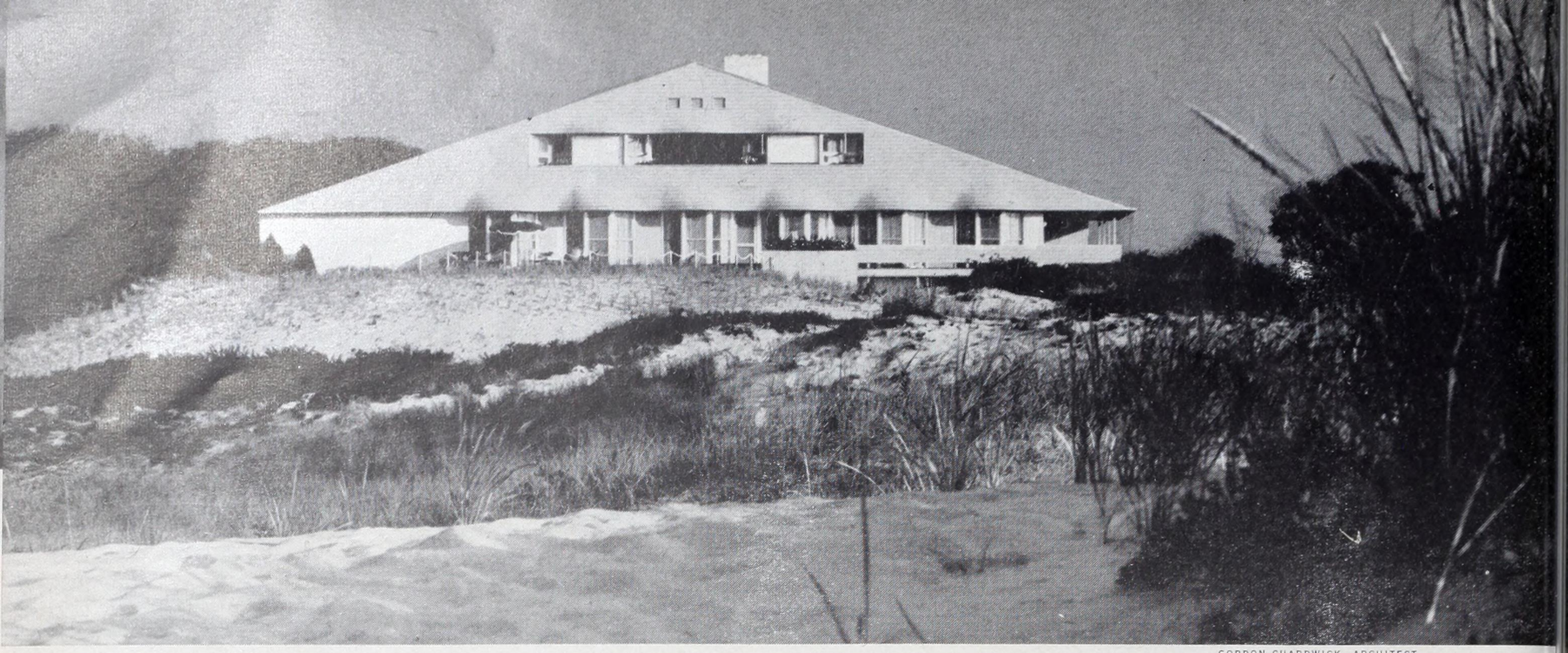
This recent New England house follows its traditional predecessors in turning a closed side to the prevailing winter winds.

GEORGE W. W. BREWSTER, ARCHITECT

To understand why there can be no single American architectural style, consider how absurd this house would be in Florida.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA STOLLER ASSOCIATES

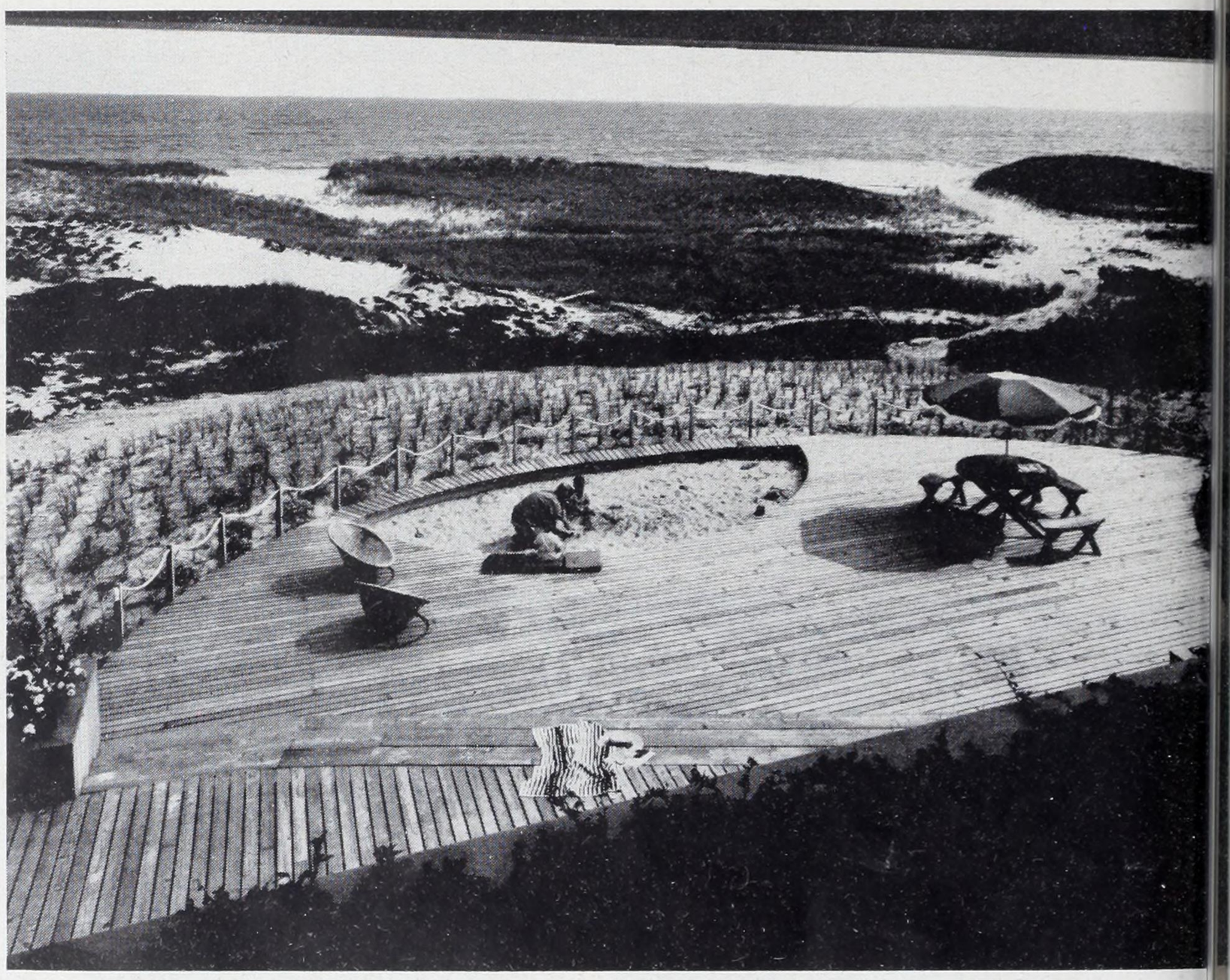




GORDON CHARDWICK, ARCHITECT

The character of the site must permeate the character of the architecture. These three photographs of a house in eastern Long Island show how it happens. The low roof line (above) is in keeping with the horizontality of the landscape; the undulation of the dunes are reflected in the overhang (below, left); the deck (below, right) is designed to flow into the sand.





FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE
continued

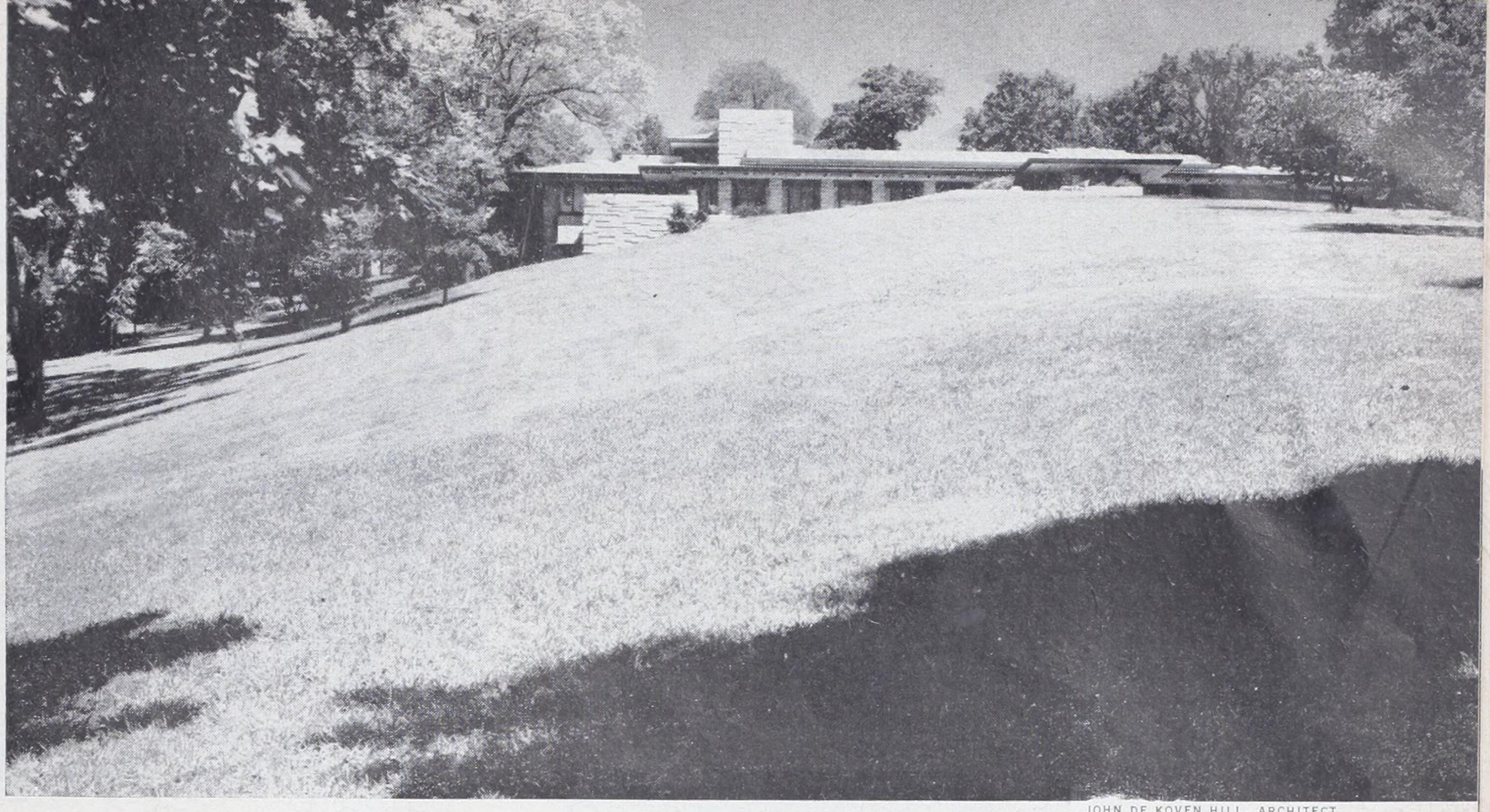
strated fact that a certain degree of shock in our every day existence is necessary if we are to function at our optimum. Heat and cold may cause us to perspire or to form goose pimples. These manifestations of the regulatory mechanisms in our bodies are well known to us. The total environment works well or badly upon the total individual. Human stresses might well be minimized or at least better distributed, but they must never be completely eliminated. How we build—and live—can contribute greatly to distributing our environmental stresses.

To recognize and utilize the climate factor in building is a common-sense matter observed by the master-builders of the past. Possibly one of the least understood reasons why homes of another era are admired and copied is for the success with which they faced climate requirements. Such realism underlines the absurdity of transporting "Cape Cod" houses to Florida and the Mission style to New England.

By accepting the obvious fact that we live in a dynamic changing world, we are well on our way to accomplishing the maximum happy use of our environment. We are not designed for passivity. We are constructed for activity. The best houses are flexible instruments to be used by vital, alert individuals for their delight and comfort. To utilize climate fully is one of the conveniences of architecture and another of the yardsticks by which it should be judged.

The Site as an Integral Part of a Building

Land should be enhanced by architecture. A building that belongs to its site extends and amplifies the natural features of the ground. There is such a sense of "rightness" that it is



The building must give beauty back to the site. Here the building seems to grow out of the crest on which it was built. There is such a sense of rightness here that it is hard to conceive of the house being any other way.

JOHN DE KOVEN HILL, ARCHITECT

difficult to conceive of its being any other way. The beauty of the site may inspire the architect's concept, but this is mutual and the building must give beauty back to the site. The character of the site must permeate the character of the architecture. Each must borrow from the other. These facts may be deceptive insofar as they move us to a feeling that it is all so easy and simple there must not be too much to it. Just remember that man frequently does the long involved, complicated thing first and, only after bitter experience, evolves a simple and direct approach.

A site may have a view, privacy, trees, boulders, a stream, or a pond. It may have one of these desirables, or none. The ground has been a necessity for building and the way the ground has been handled has been an essential part of architecture. Natural features of a site, whether trees, rocks, streams, or slopes, should be utilized and not obliterated in the final result. It is wiser to subordinate man-made constructions to the natural features of any site. Any natural place has assets all its own which add up to riches when sensitively handled.

A building may anchor itself to the ground and relate imperceptibly to it by means of walls, walks, terraces, and pools. Water can be used with handsome effect in landscaping the terminals of a building. Just as plants can become the transition between the structure and the ground, so also can water serve as a means of interest and relationship with building and earth.

The photograph of the California home by Charles Sumner Greene illustrates a wall of stone rising with great subtlety from its site. Notice how the few small pebbles on the ground build gradually to rock outcroppings and eventually a man-made wall of stones and cement is joined.

How to Select a Building Site

To an unskilled observer the problems in a difficult site seem insurmountable. Yet time and time again it has been demonstrated that the site with the most obvious disadvantages results in buildings with great character and utility. A tip to the thrifty is to seek those sites which seem undesirable to the real estate dealer's mind and, therefore, underpriced in relation to other properties. An illustration of this is the house located on the edge of a rock-pit in Florida. The site was a "spoil area" from which rock had been removed for neighborhood roads. The established price was one-half of existing values in the vicinity. The money saved on land was utilized in construction (*Please turn the page*)

PLANNING TO BUILD? THEN YOU WILL NEED HOUSE BEAUTIFUL'S CLIMATE CHART FOR YOUR AREA

• One of the things a modern, well-designed house can do is level out the extremes of climate. Heating plants and air-conditioning systems do this, but there are lots of other climate flaws that can be eliminated or alleviated if we plan for them before we start to build.

HOUSE BEAUTIFUL's Climate Control research program charted and interpreted the climatic patterns of 15 major population areas. The data is based on 50 years of Weather Bureau records in these areas and gives month-by-month extremes and averages on rainfall, temperature, relative humidity, and vapor pressure. Solar tables give hours of sunshine to be expected, solar heat output; sun height is given for each hour of the day for each month. Wind tables show wind direction and intensity for four quarters of the day, by the month.

Such data will help you and your architect orient your house on the site, plan more intelligently such crucial things as width of roof overhang, where to place the terrace, size and frequency and direction of glass openings, blow-through capacity for breezes in summer. HOUSE BEAUTIFUL's climate charts will help you get more house for your money.

If you live in these areas there are House Beautiful Climate reports for you:

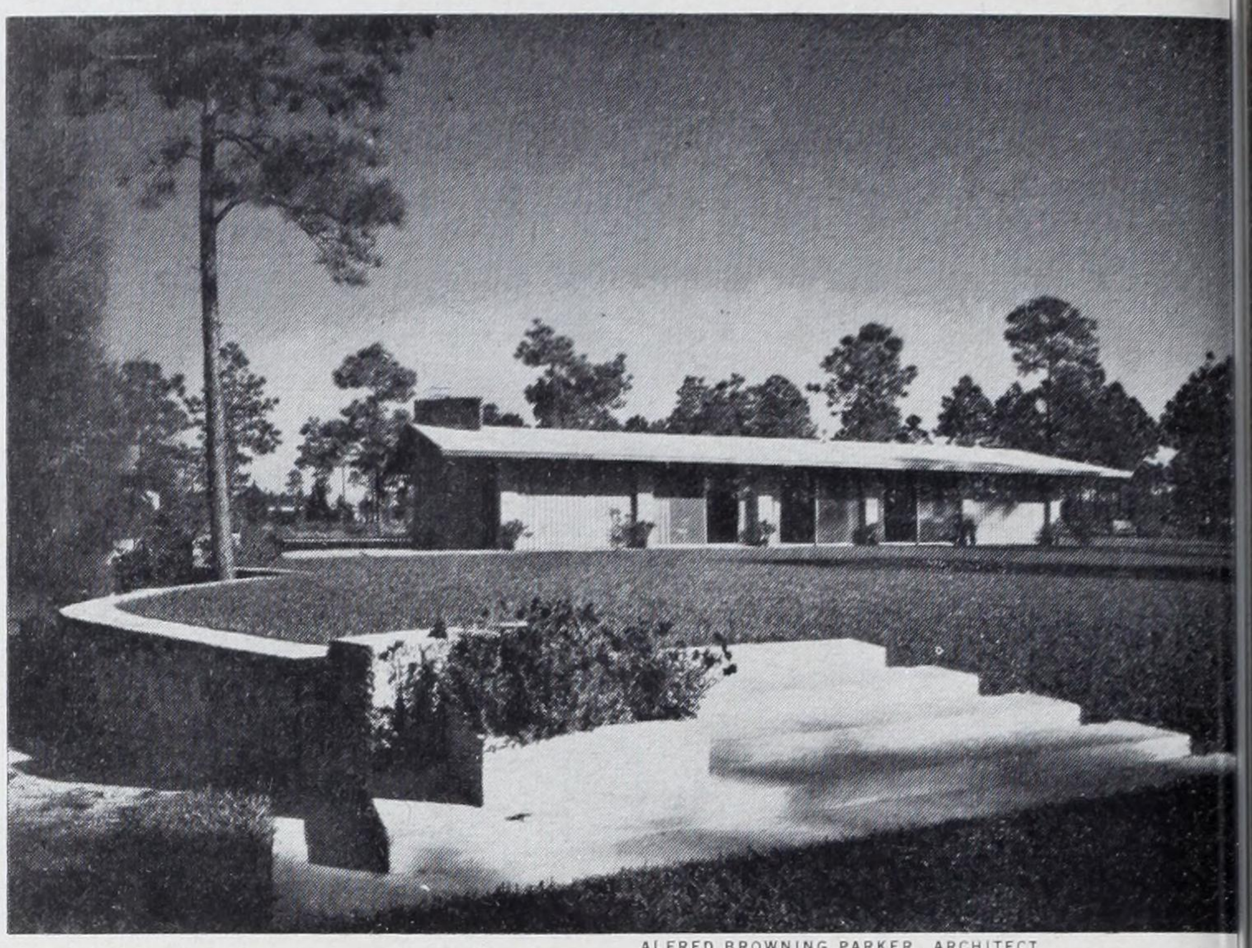
State of Ohio
Metropolitan New York and New Jersey (including Philadelphia)
State of Florida
Arid Southwest
Gulf Coast—from Galveston to Tallahassee
Kansas City—St. Louis area plus 200-mile radius
Minneapolis—St. Paul plus 300-mile radius
Chicago plus 300-mile radius
Pittsburgh—Akron plus 200-mile radius, except to the north
The Humid Northwest
Charleston, South Carolina, plus 300-mile radius
Albany, New York, plus 300-mile radius to north and west only
Boston plus 200-mile radius
Baltimore, Maryland,—Norfolk—Columbia, South Carolina
High Plains centering on Denver

SEND 50¢ FOR EACH REPORT TO ROOM 800-B, 572 MADISON AVE., N.Y.C. 22



JACK HILMER, ARCHITECT

When the site has natural features of beauty, the house should be designed to retain them, rather than obliterate them. Here a shore house is fitted in among trees and boulders.



ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT

Here is an example of a site that had nothing, so the architect created a situation with interest: a raised platform that developed character from ramps and retaining walls.

In a supreme example of the exploitation of a site, this house of stone rises so subtly out of the natural rock it is hard to tell where nature stops and the building of man begins.

CHARLES SUMNER GREENE, ARCHITECT



and landscaping to create an unusually handsome home and garden. The building was sensibly adapted to its site by placing the main living portions high above the rockpit and using the lower level as a sunken garden.

There are innumerable ways to convert a disadvantage into an asset. In selecting a building site seek the advice of your architect. He frequently will be able to foresee the difficulties that are inherent in certain properties. Also, he can judge the fortuitous circumstances that exist in any site.

The previously mentioned matter of climate enters any analysis of a site. It is important to know not only temperature and humidity extremes but also the prevailing direction of penetrating, chilling winds in the winter and cooling summer breezes. Sun angles and directions become comfort factors of any site. Think of these things in making a selection. The north side of a hill may be less advantageous than the south side, in a cold climate, but quite the reverse in a warm climate.

Landscaping is largely contingent upon the nourishment afforded by the soil. In general, the indigenous growth on a site is a good indication of a soil's potential and also an indicator concerning the drainage of the land.

The opening paragraph concerning this yardstick suggested that there are intangible characteristics of a site which architecture brings out. Learn to look for these attributes of a house and land relationships. Wherever man has fitted his dwelling amicably to its site, an unmistakable serenity is apparent. Such felicitous examples work with a site and not against it. A craftsman in wood might describe it as planing with the grain instead of against the grain.

To this point the site has been considered in an abstract and somewhat ideal manner. To discover such ideal plots of ground today requires moving out of the city into the country. Many city dwellers with the (*Please turn to page* 244)

Beauty Secret

(for your table, too!)



She *always* chooses

Will & Baumer Candles

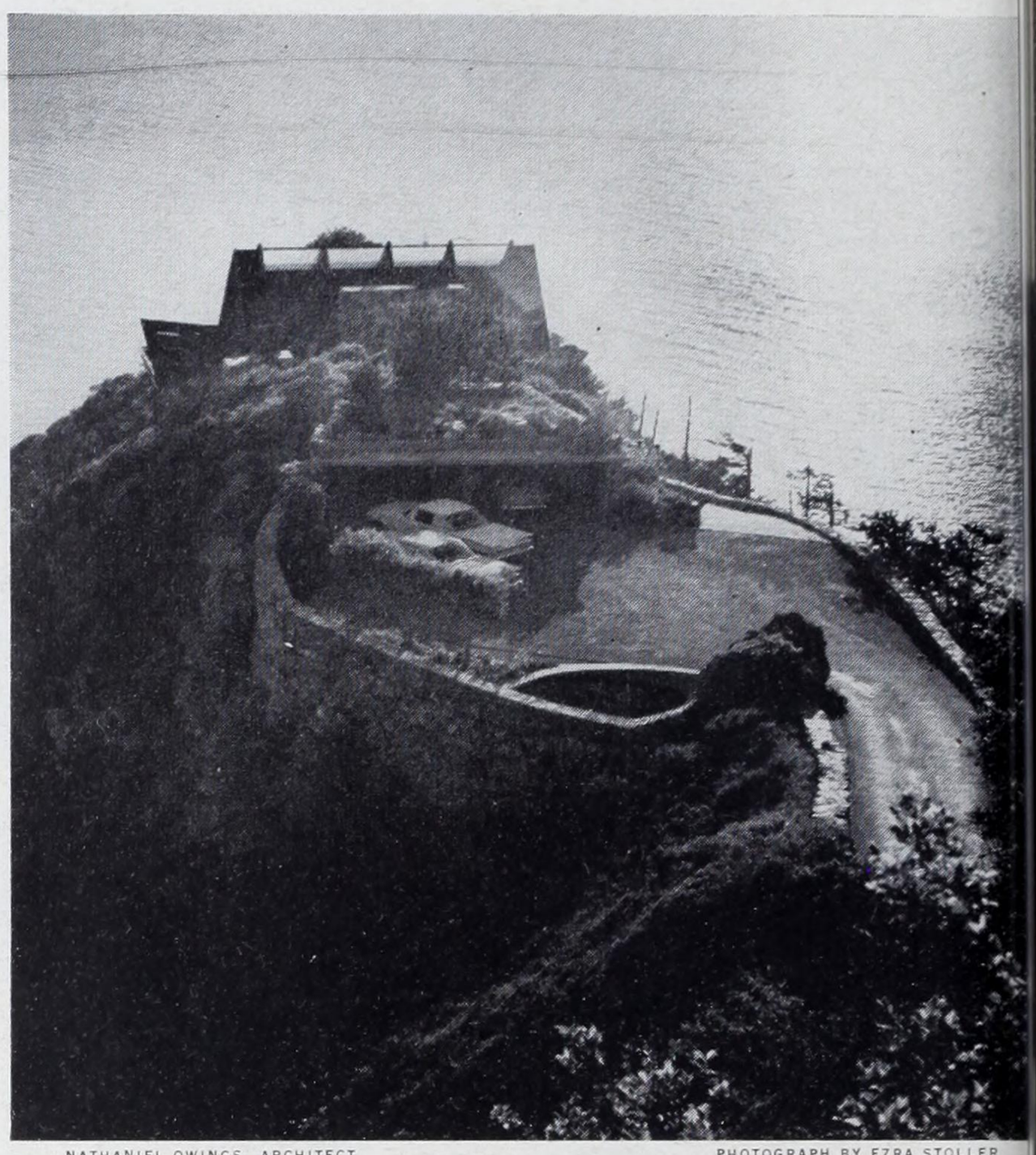
Whatever form of candlelight she plans to beautify her table, she knows the *one* brand to buy with confidence: Will & Baumer—a name well known to her mother and her mother's mother. She knows that *only* Will & Baumer offers such a complete selection of sizes, styles and fashion-right colors. She's confident — and proud, too — because her choice is the choice of America's leading hostesses.

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FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 242



NATHANIEL OWINGS, ARCHITECT PHOTOGRAPH BY EZRA STOLLER

The most impossible site may yield a house with spectacular beauty. This cliffside house requires a tortuous approach, but as a result has a character that could not have been achieved anywhere else.

economic means are willing to give up the conveniences and cultural advantages of the urban scene for the beauty of the country.

In the metropolitan areas the individual lots are small and tortured with poles, wires, asphalt and concrete paving. Where individual homes are feasible from the standpoint of land cost, the results are almost invariably sad because a good total environment is missing.

To discover the character of the site requires a sensitive intelligence and to create a building that strengthens, exploits, and extends this unique quality is an architectural hallmark worth observation and praise.

Landscaping

We must acknowledge landscaping as an essential element of architecture. To observe the sane use of property in this regard is another tangible yardstick for measuring architecture. Like all things that aspire to beauty, landscaping must make good sense.

Living materials become the designer's medium of expression: grass and ground cover to hold the soil; shrubbery to soften the lines of the building and to make transitions with the ground; trees to shade the building from sun, gla and rain.

The transplanting and main nance of plant materials requi scientific knowledge. Lack of sk in this phase will be quickly ma evident by ruthless, yet predic ble, natural processes. There a more problems with landscapi within the city than in the subur or in the country. However t skilled landscape architect can co with any situation.

Here are a few of the major fa tors that should be consider when you plant in the city: H will it look at maturity? How lo to reach maturity? Will it gr too fast, or too slowly? Is adapted to local conditions of so heat, cold, water, smoke, a gases?

A landscape architect must be patient person. Immediate fu scale results are both expensi and difficult to obtain. Rapid gro ing trees may also quickly dec or get leggy. Slow-growing plan are more durable and the ultima form can be predicted and enjoy over a longer period of time. T landscape designer has speci knowledge concerning a large nu ber of plants. He must also und

(*Please turn to page* 246)

FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 244

stand how these plants may be used together.

Plants are in a constant struggle for survival. By observing the local pattern introduced by nature, we can usually succeed in a similar pattern. It is foolhardy to eradicate the existing patterns and bring in a completely exotic vegetation.

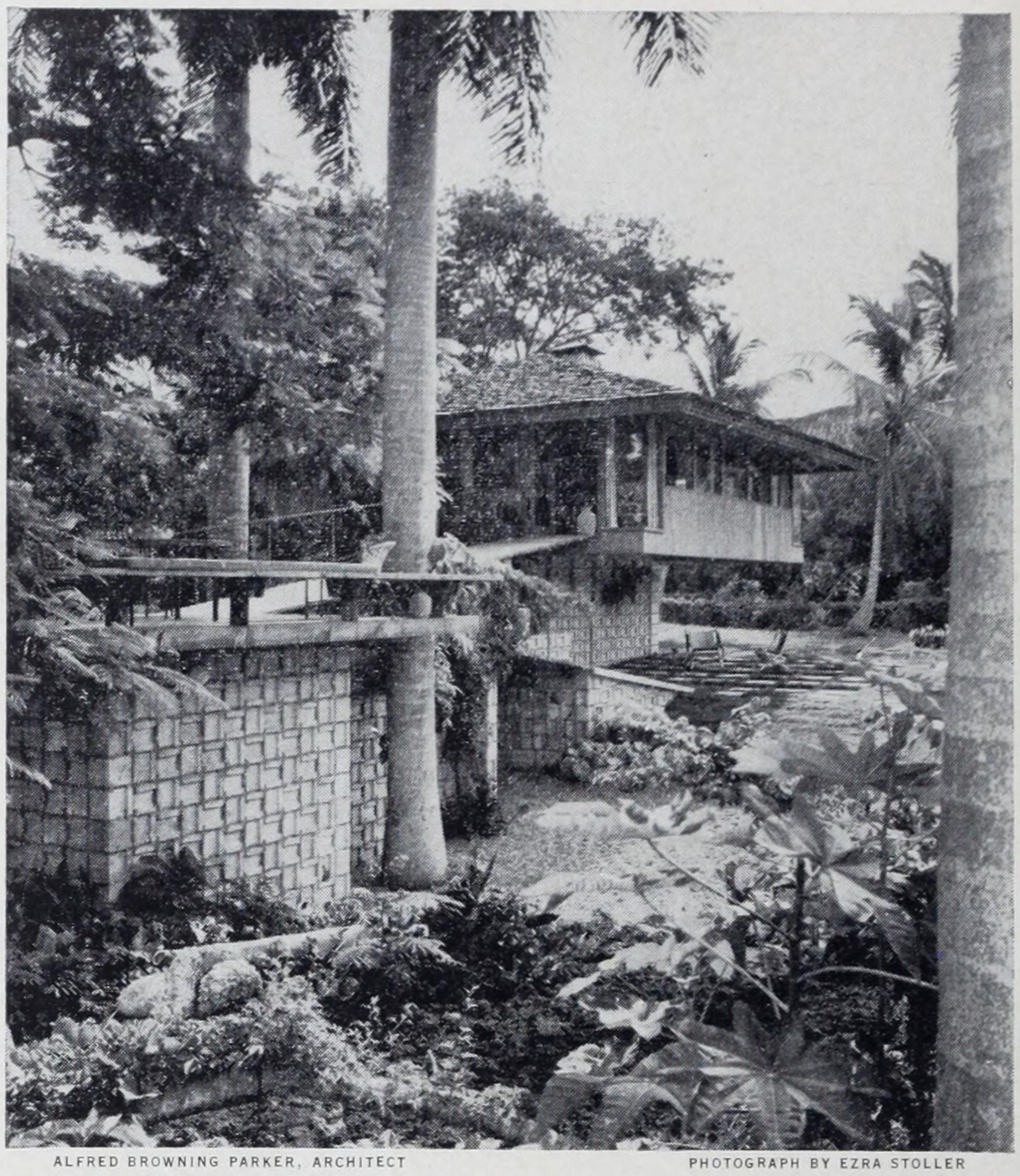
While first cost in landscape work is usually a big consideration, it is prudent to buy the best obtainable materials. Anything less is usually expensive in the end. Remember that first cost is not nearly so important as maintenance expense. Obviously since plants are organic, growing things, it is not possible to avoid a certain amount of care. By choosing shrubs and trees that are hardy, with neat growth habits, minimum maintenance can be obtained.

A certain amount of garden maintenance is a pleasant healthy avocation, but most of us prefer to keep the garden manicuring to a minimum. This can be done by a proper choice of plant materials and the utilization of durable materials of construction.

Other ways to minimize landscaping maintenance are by building terraces, patios, paths, and pools. These design features are most successful when they are constructed by methods and of materials used in the building, although, of course, to a more modest extent. While the initial expense of a flagstone terrace is much greater than planting grass, the difference diminishes through the years as the maintenance of one remains negligible while the grass requires watering, mowing, sweeping, fertilizing, weeding, and sometimes even replacing.

Water has already been discussed as a transitional device of great value in landscaping. Ponds can be made by shaping the ground and utilizing streams or springs as a source. Water in the landscape offers great interest as a reflector of forms and colors as well as a sensitive texture-mirror of the wind. (Photograph on page 248.)

(*Please turn to page* 248)



ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT — PHOTOGRAPH BY EZRA STOLLER

A spoil area, a site that was by-passed by real estate agents became this interesting situation. The house was raised over sunken spot and garden made there. Ramp entry makes arrival a real event.



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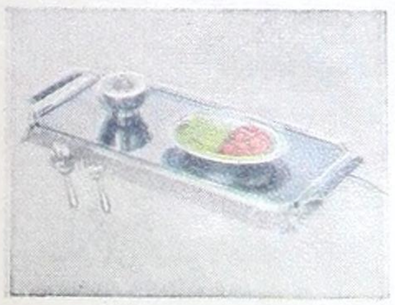


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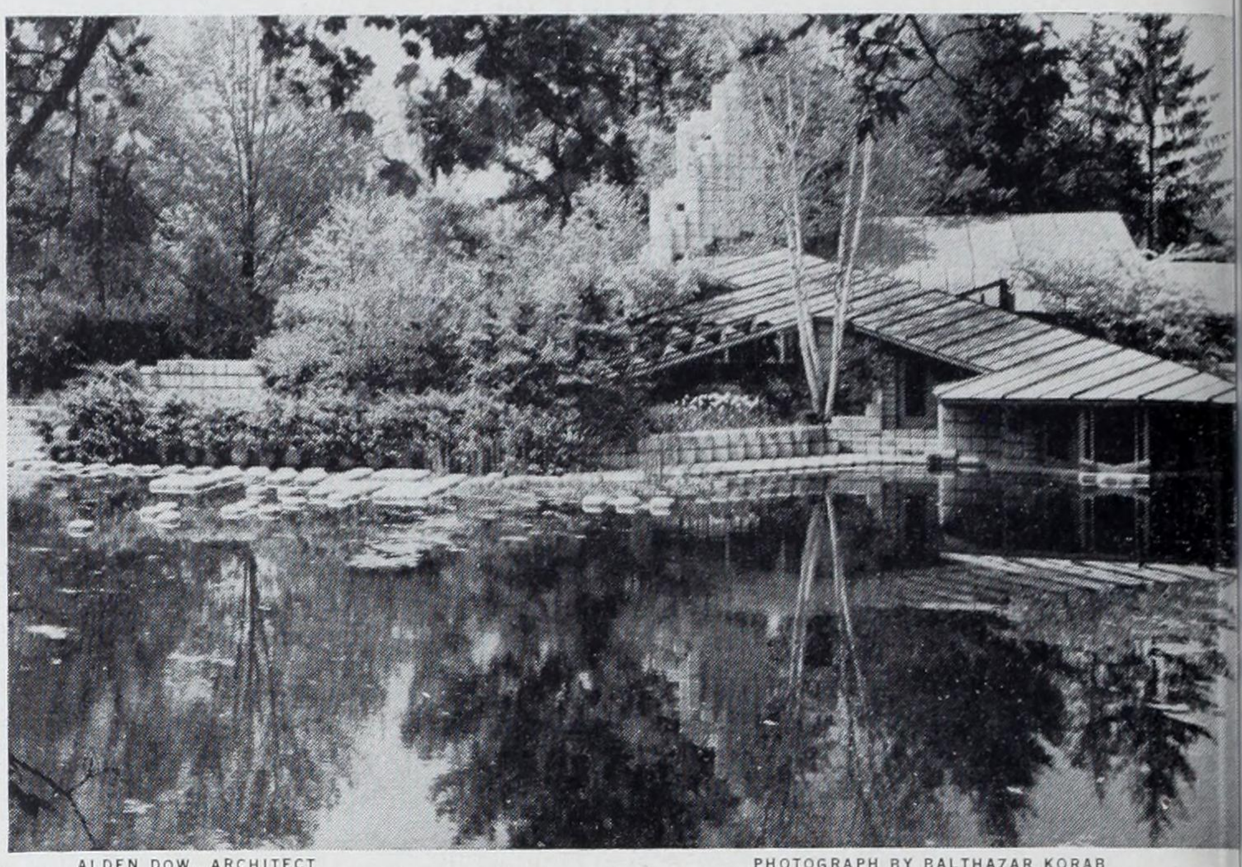
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FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 246



ALDEN DOW, ARCHITECT — PHOTOGRAPH BY BALTHAZAR KORAB

Water has great value as a transitional device to wed the house to its surroundings. It offers great variety as a reflector of forms and colors as well as a sensitive texture-mirror of the wind.

The proper drainage and grading of any site are as critical as the plantings. Careful planning in advance will insure the best use of dollars spent for drainage.

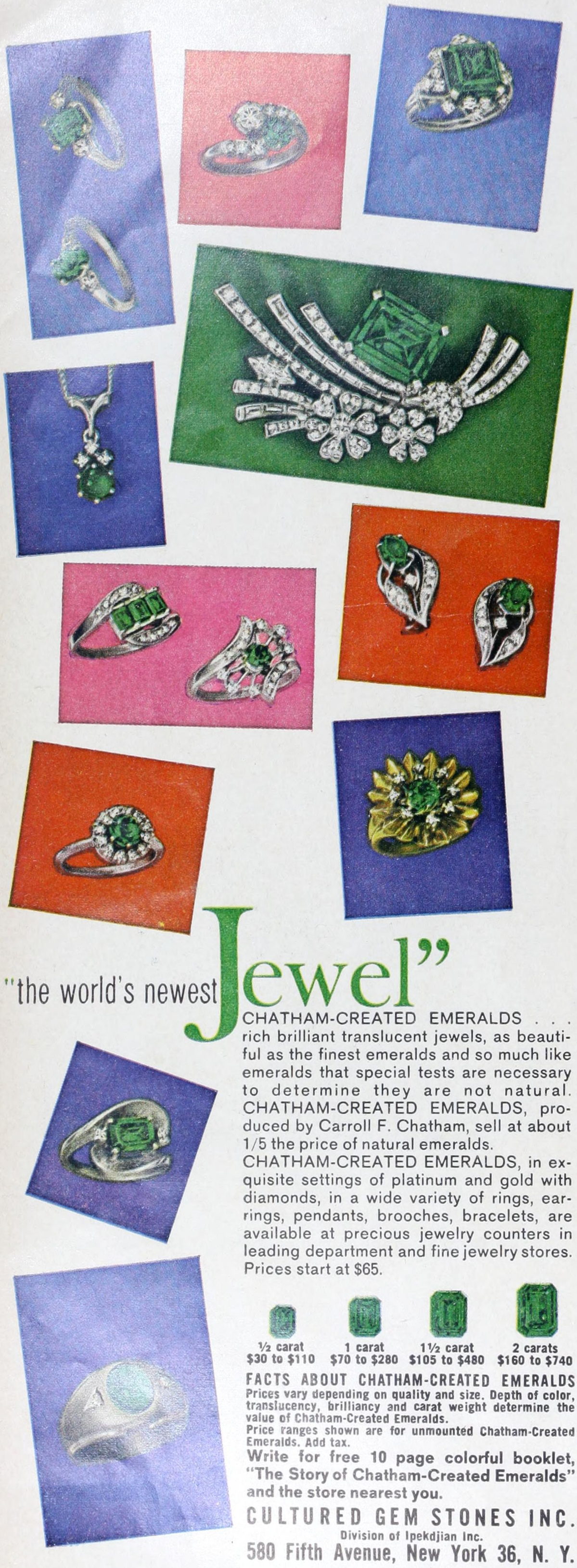
Any building and its setting are inseparable. The landscape planning should be carefully designed to reinforce and extend the total effect of the architecture. The aesthetic concepts suggested concerning architecture apply with equal validity to landscape architecture. Beauty and utility are the core of good landscape design, even as they are the central core of architecture.

(*Please turn to page* 250)



ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT — PHOTOGRAPH BY EZRA STOLLER

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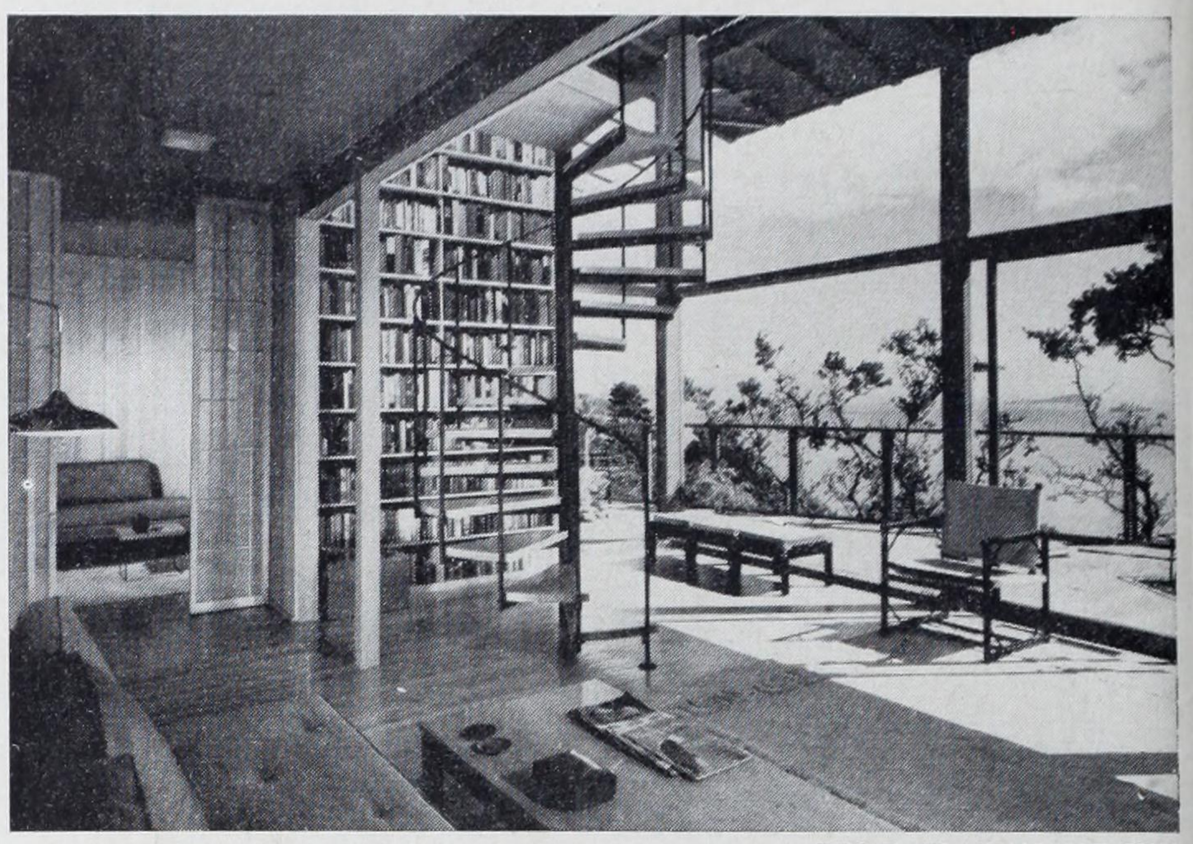
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FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 248



MARQUIS AND STOLLER, ARCHITECTS



TWO PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA STOLLER

A steep slope need not make building out of the question. A poured concrete wall, such as that at right, can support a building platform to give a spectacular view, such as that above. Cost of wall might be partly offset by lower cost of building site.

Effective dimensional thinking by the architect is never more apparent than in a garden. Everything must be considered from eye level, both seated and standing, and the third dimension becomes of utmost importance. There are factors constantly changing in a garden which the skillful designer anticipates to achieve a happy relationship between the building and the site during all twelve months. Even the changing direction of light on a single day can create handsome and anticipated effects: low back or front lighting in the morning, as the sun rises; direct vertical rays at noon; and a complete change in the late afternoon as the western sun defines the color, transparency, translucency, or opacity of plant materials.

The Utility of Landscaping

Landscaping contributes in practical ways to the comfort of a building. Privacy screening can be accomplished for those areas in which seclusion is desired. Glare and heat can be overcome by a proper use of plant materials. Soil erosion can be halted. Service areas, whether for clotheslines, garbage cans, automobiles, or deliveries, can be defined adequately and yet hidden from general view. Frequently one series of trees will do several utilitarian jobs, in addition to adding beauty to the site.

For example, a line of trees, planted on the western side of a residence, can shade the house all afternoon, thereby reducing the heat load for summer air conditioning.

Trees, if tall enough, can also reduce the sky glare—another source of discomfort. Trees along the street side can filter street dust and car noises. They also can function as a possible safety barrier (a fence of tree trunks) against cars out of control.

When lawns are indicated, and

(*Please turn to page* 253)

FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 248



ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT — TWO PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA STOLLER

The stand of bamboo that faces this house was the major site consideration here. House was placed so that major view was toward this towering grove. Ground cover is thick layer of bamboo leaves.

rass can be a low-cost and mini-
num maintenance cover, these sug-
estions may be valuable: Plan the
rass areas for ease in mowing by
lanting only on level areas or gen-
e slopes. Use ground cover on
teep slopes or in shady conditions
here grass will not grow prop-
rly. By restricting the grass areas
ithin a mowing border of masonry
flagstones, brick, concrete) tedi-
ous edging and trimming can vir-
tually be eliminated. Your local seed store can assist in selecting a proper variety and advise the best ways to feed and to check insects or weeds.

There are various materials that we can use to substitute for lawn areas. None are completely free from upkeep but for some purposes

(*Please turn the page*)



HENRY EGGERS, ARCHITECT

A deck at treetop height gives the owners of this house an outlook over nearby stream and countryside. An ordinary plan here might not have given the owners the kind of living they left the city for.

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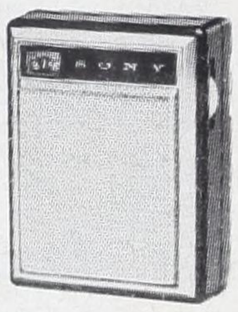
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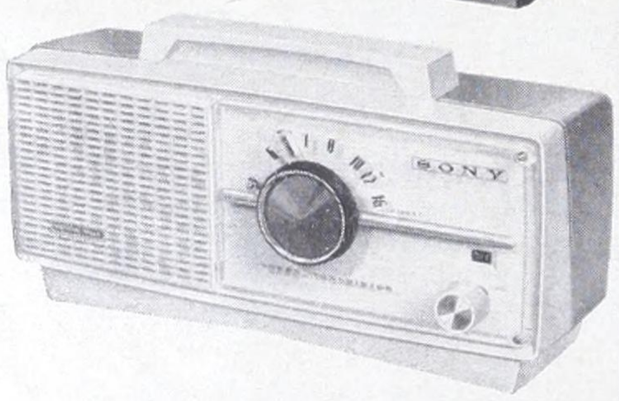
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FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE



WALLACE K. HARRISON, ARCHITECT — FOUR PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA STOLLER

This craggy, rockbound coast called for a house that would match its rugged strength. The cantilevered concrete projection meets this requirement and also gives beautiful vistas up and down the coast.

and in certain locations, gravel, sand, pebbles, wood chips, and even bark have been successful. To prevent weeds from sprouting through, tarpaper or one of the plastic films can be spread on the ground before placing the lawn substitute.

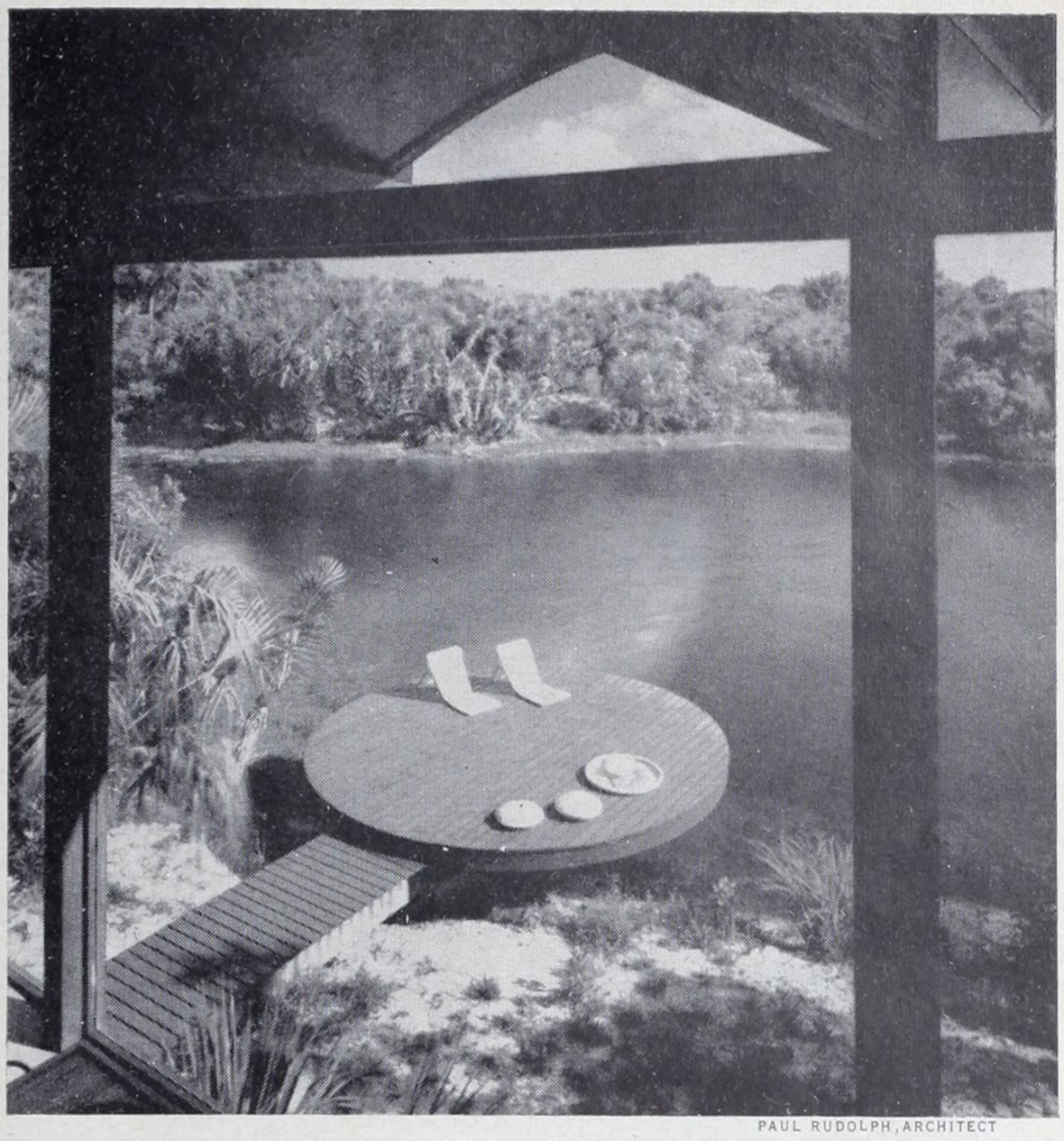
Historically, garden design is an expression of culture and civilization as revealing as architecture. In recent years there has been a great deal of interest in the gardens of the East—particularly those of Japan. There is considerable for us to learn from the gardens of the Orient. A strong sense of serenity is achieved and they create real beauty in very small areas.

If any single point should be emphasized in this section on landscaping, it is the value of siting—the placing of the house on the land. To locate a building properly



EMIL SCHMIDLIN, ARCHITECT

The importance of retaining valuable trees on a building site has often been stressed, but the use of trees for climate control functions and as a focus for the house has not always been fully exploited.



PAUL RUDOLPH, ARCHITECT

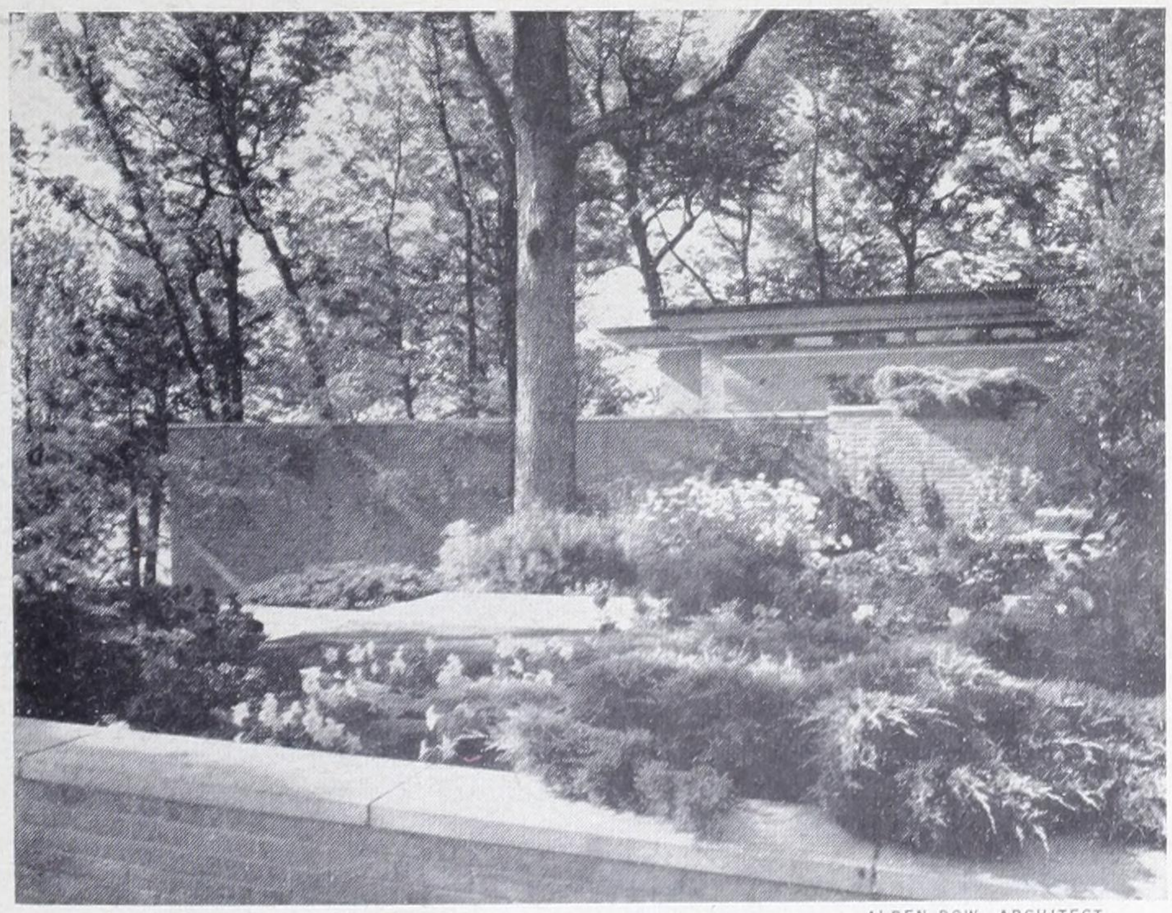
Landscape planning should be carefully designed to reinforce the total effect of the architecture. Here, through a deck that projects over it, the serenity of a pond is brought into and tied to a house.

becomes so important an element in its use and delight that every skill should be directed to this end. In judging landscaping, analyze first the quality of site planning. Reread the paragraphs concerning site so that you can quickly recognize the factors that are important.

The skill and sensitivity of a designer is displayed in various subtle ways. Look for plantings that relate the building to the earth, and especially notice how the terminals are handled.

It is generally better aesthetically to group together like plants of one color. For example, mixing white, red, and yellow azaleas indiscriminately is less successful than a clump of each color placed with an eye for the total design effect. The size of the leaf will frequently determine the arrangement of plant materials. It is possible to create the illusion of distance by planting small-leaved plants behind large-leaved plants. Sunlight falling through vines and trees becomes a subtle ally of the designer when plants of proper

(*Please turn the page*)



ALDEN DOW, ARCHITECT

Plantings of shrubs and flowers quickly reveal the skill and sensitivity of a designer. Look for those that relate building to land, especially at the terminals. Here is an example of good landscaping.

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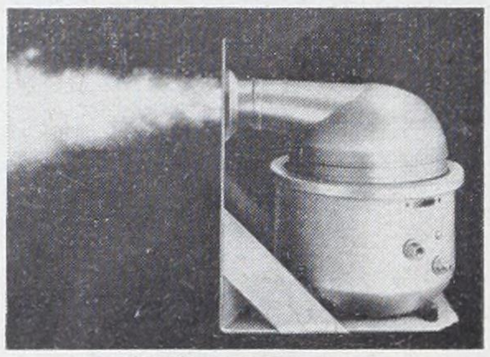
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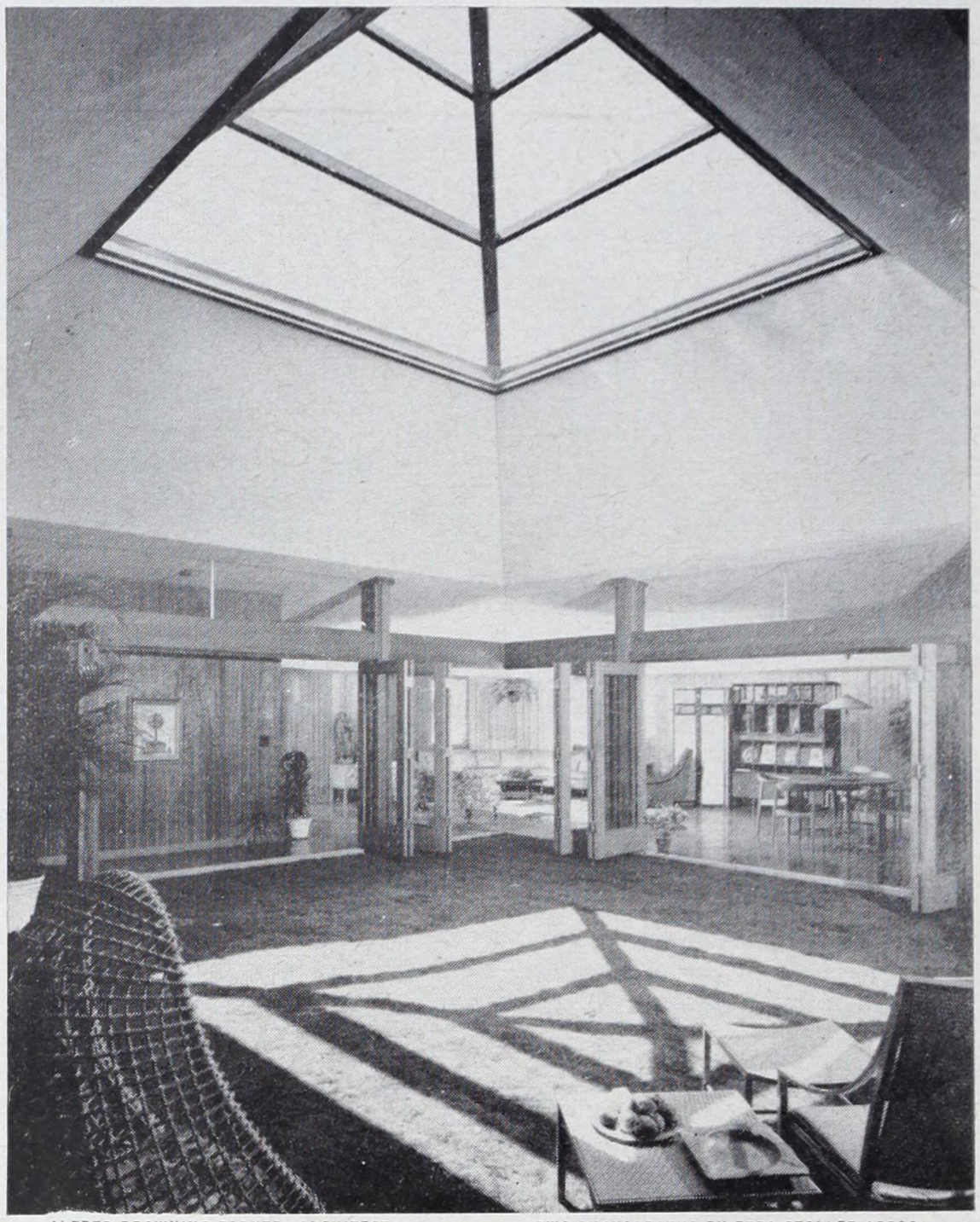
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FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE



ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT — TWO PHOTOGRAPHS BY EZRA STOLLER ASSOC.

Inside the house you may sometimes find space that seems thrown away, yet which has been used by the architect to create an emotional effect. Here, open center court makes every room seem enormous.

density and size are selected.

In one sense landscaping is our acknowledgement that strength flows from the direct relationship of ourselves with the land. This rapport always makes itself felt in a well-landscaped residence.

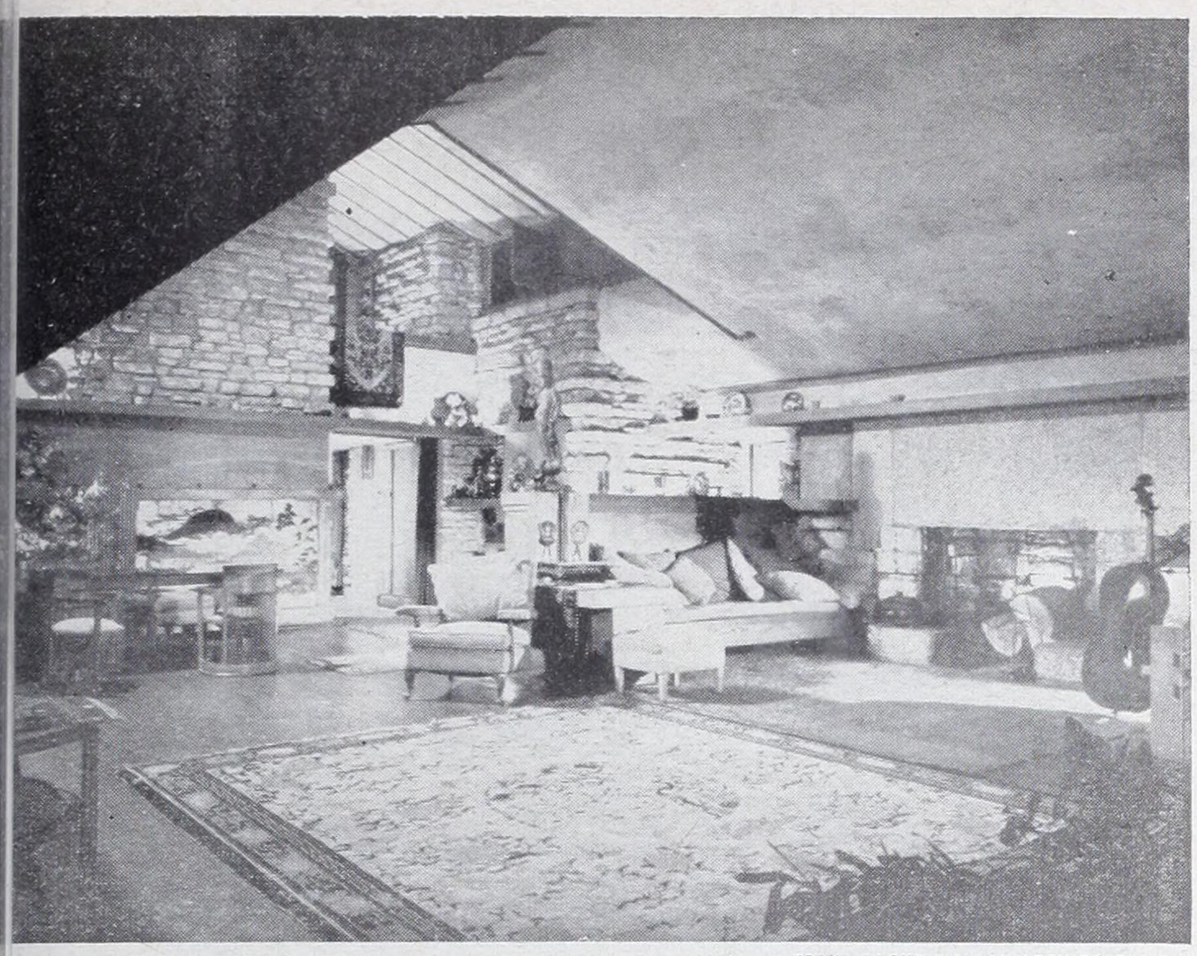
Interiors

The cumulative effect of architecture results from a building plus its siting and landscaping plus its furnishings. Recall the admonition to think of architecture as beautiful, purposeful space. To enclose this space and to furnish it so that beauty and utility become one should be the architect's and owner's goal. This goal will not be accomplished unless the furnishings of the spaces are selected with discernment and discrimination.

There are some who attempt to split architecture. They would have architects establish the exteriors and "interior designers" responsible for the furnishings of the spaces. This is an absurdity dangerous to the creation of architecture. It has been emphasized that architecture is primarily the creation of interior space. The interiors are the responsibility of the architect as they are, indeed, his main reason for existence. There is a need and honored place for the interior decorator or designer, but he must be a member of the architect's team in the same sense as are the engineers in structures, electrical, plumbing, air conditioning, and acoustics. The architect must direct and co-ordinate this building team, so one part of the team does not negate the work of the others.

Mechanical aptitudes are of value to an architect but when we begin to analyze the differences between mere building and architecture, we find that perhaps the greatest and most characteristic trait of the creative architect is visualization.

Visualization is the ability to create mental images of three dimensional spaces and forms—spatial imagination. In most three dimensional forms, there is an exterior aspect and an interior aspect. The greater the architect's power in visualizing both these aspects, the greater the quality of his buildings. The most efficient utili-



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, ARCHITECT

Great architecture reveals the architect's supreme talent—visualization of space in *three* dimensions, not just horizontally and vertically. See how much interest this room has in all three directions.

zation of space is not necessarily the most complete utilization. Frequently you discover rooms or buildings where space is, at first glance, wasted or thrown away. However, by the very emotional effects that space can create, what is *apparently* thrown away is actually well used.

This is the realm of the architect, and how well he uses his prerogatives to create these pleasant emotional effects determines the success of his building. To assign these prerogatives to others is a sure way to fail in the creation of architecture. Architecture has to be a total unified concept.

Once the main concept has been established, the architect needs many hands, brains, and hearts to realize the completed building. In furnishings there are many decisions to make concerning colors, textures, finishes, shapes, and sizes. When these decisions are resolved, there is still considerable work fabricating and acquiring these furnishings. In all of these matters enlightened and informed assistance is a necessity.

Interior "decoration" is a misnomer. A better description would be the *fittings* of a room. These fittings fall into two broad categories—basic furnishings and accessories. The accepted design process is to work from the general to the particular, so the basic furnishings must be considered by the architect in the preliminary stage of his work. For example, an architect's beginning studies should locate all seating and tables, music sources and music storage in the living room. Table, chairs, and storage should be established in the dining room. Working surfaces and all equipment need to be roughly known in the kitchen and laundry. Beds, chests, and seating sketched in for the bedrooms. The early solving of such basic furnishings, whether built-in or free standing, even before the working drawings are made, is one way to test the validity of the plans proposed. If such matters are left till the building is finished all kinds of unfortunate mistakes may be discovered —too late to be rectified.

There are unique advantages to building-in many basic furnishings. A harmonious relation can then be established with the building. Materials of the furnishings may echo the materials of the building. Such furnishings become a direct part of the architecture, thus creating greater unity. A table cantilevered from the wall and built of the same wood as the wall will unmistakably relate and belong to the building.

The art of understatement becomes invaluable in achieving an integrity of both building and furnishings. You will discover this integration in some of the interiors pictured on these pages. I believe the greatest architectural achievements of the future will be those in which the main furnishings will be built-in appurtenances of the buildings themselves.

To furnish a space usefully and handsomely requires knowledge and discipline. Knowledge of what

(*Please turn the page*)



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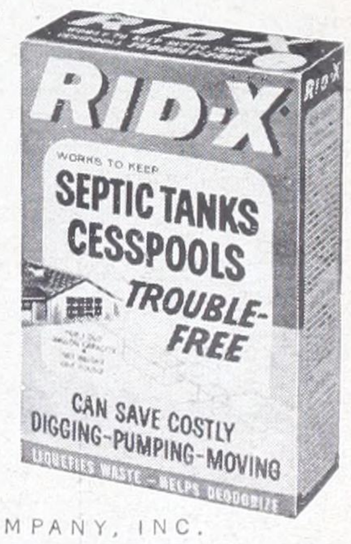
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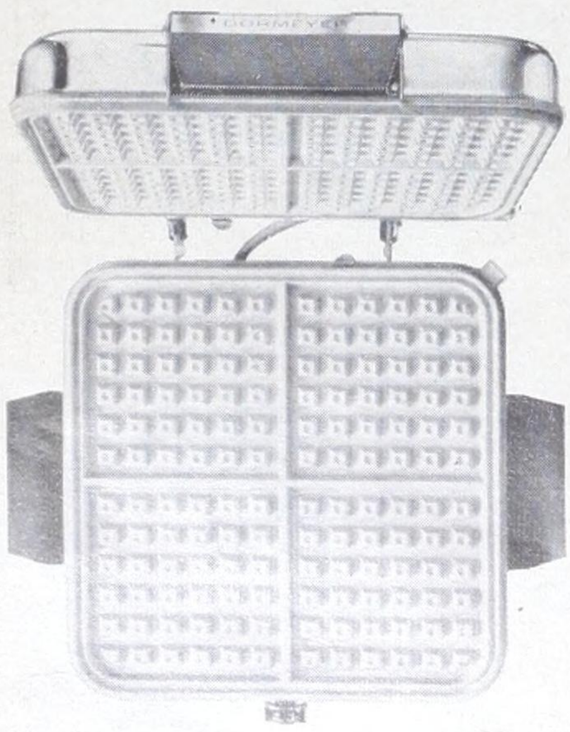
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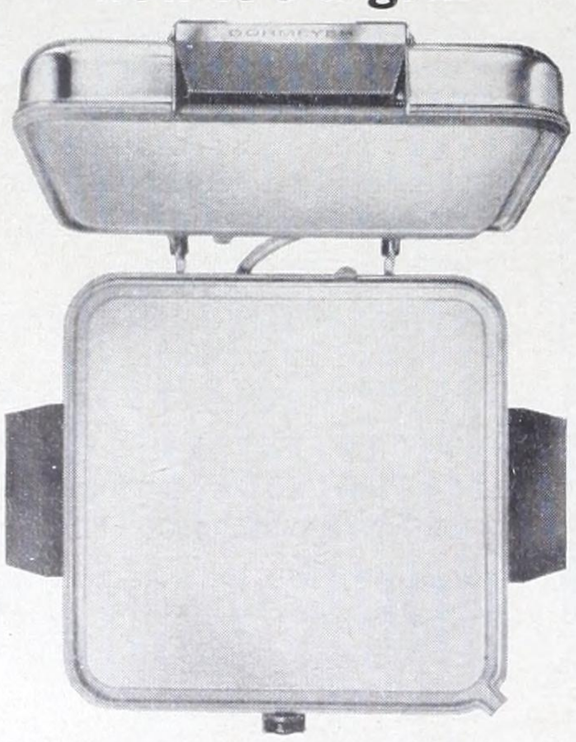
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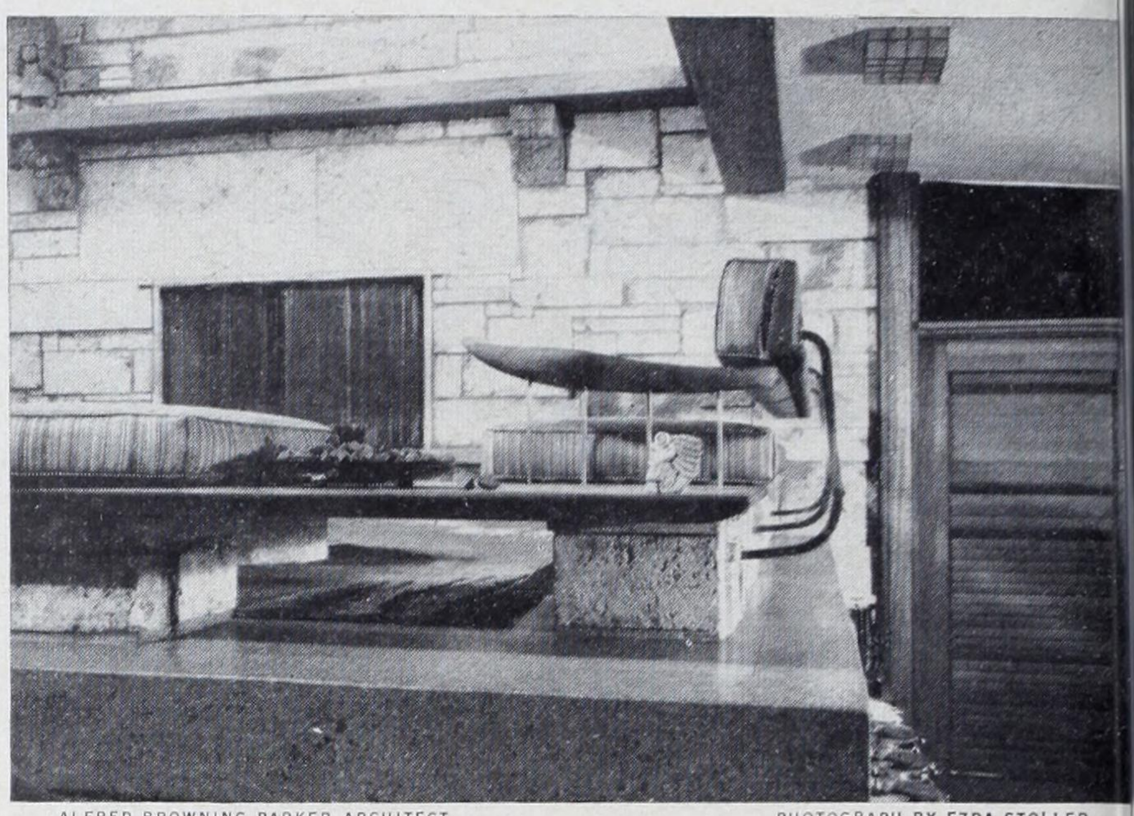


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FOUR MORE YARDSTICKS FOR JUDGING A HOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE



ALFRED BROWNING PARKER, ARCHITECT PHOTOGRAPH BY EZRA STOLLER

Using the same materials in the built-in furnishings as in the structure of the house develops a harmonious relationship not otherwise possible. Couch base here is made of same stone as the house wall.

to do and the discipline to do it. When you enter a truly beautiful interior, you are less intrigued by individual objects and more engaged by the total result. You will sense a unity in the furnishings that relates to the building. The tables, chairs, rugs, draperies, cabinets seem an inevitable and natural arrangement of what had to be.

Accessories are equally important as a proper basic arrangement although they generally have a secondary position in the sequence of planning. There is no such thing as a list of proper accessories. They involve all of the things that we need and use for our education, convenience, comfort, and nourishment.

Some of my favorites would include bowls, buckets, boxes, carving boards, trays, cookie molds, spoons and carvings made of teak, maple or cherry; brass accessories in the form of table lamps, ash trays, and planters; Chinese bronzes of all ages, shapes, and sizes; Japanese screens, prints, and painted scrolls; music boxes of whatever era; books and magazines with hard covers, paper covers, or no covers.

If only one source was available, I would choose Nature. She affords uniquely handsome accessories of incredible variety: living plants, dried grasses, fall foliage, wild flowers, rocks, pebbles, fruits, berries, blooms. These are, in some measure, available in every location.

Fine art is the ultimate with which to furnish your home. Few of us can afford a Van Gogh, a Renoir, or a Rodin. But we might acquire a chair by Wharton Es erick that is sculptural fine a plus the added function of being seat. Remember there are innun erable articles without a hug price tag that warrant artistic a probation. For example, among th accessories available for th kitchen are inexpensive utensils complete beauty as well as pract cality. Many of these objects ar made of brass, copper, or stainles steel. They may become the art facts of our civilization.

The arrangement of accessorie is an art in itself. A safe guide i to create situations that work fo you. When you have accomplishe an efficient and useful layout, the try for beauty. Use and beaut must, of their very nature, co-exis and it does not follow that they ca exist separately in the realm o architecture. When it does no work right, it cannot possess beauty And if it is not beautiful, it does no work right. This is not an "either or" situation but more like th clasp of two hands that create a meaningful grip.

Use and beauty may be com pared to partners, dependent one upon the other, each giving, each receiving. The Yin and Yang prin ciple of the Orient symbolizes the relationship between male and fe male but it also may serve as a diagram of utility and aesthetics.

In applying this yardstick re member that rooms are for people. No room is complete in itself with out individuals to use it. Furnish ings should never dominate—they should preferably afford a useful and handsome background for the life patterns that flow around them.